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THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

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THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

TO A

NOBLE LORD.

CONTAINING

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

AFFAIRS OF THAT KINGDOM,

SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO THIS SUBJECT.

——— I will awake a higher ſenſe,
A love that graſps the happineſs of millions.

THOMPSON.

DUBLIN:

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M.DCC.LXXIX.

G.R. III.

Since theſe papers were ſent to the preſs, the Commons of Ireland have, in their addreſs to his majeſty, reſolved unanimouſly, "that it is not by temporary expedients, "but by a free trade alone that this nation "is now to be ſaved from impending ruin". And the lords have in their addreſs unanimouſly entered into a reſolution of the ſame import.

To the READER.

THE numerous references in thoſe letters will, it is hoped, be excuſed, when the motive for giving the reader that trouble is conſidered. In a ſubject of great importance an anonymous writer thought he ſhould take too much liberty, in mentioning facts or opinions from himſelf.

He

He has therefore reſorted to the ſtatute books and journals of parliament in both kingdoms, and to ſome of the moſt approved commercial authorities among the Engliſh writers. The hiſtory of thoſe proceedings ſeems not to be ſufficiently underſtood in either kingdom; an attempt to collect it from the many journals and acts of parliament, in which it lies diſperſed, may poſſibly aſſiſt thoſe who enquire after truth, and wiſh to form fair and candid concluſions for the good of the whole Britiſh Empire. In the conſideration of this ſubject it was neceſſary

ceſſary to depart from the chronological order. The great and frequent diſtreſſes of Ireland during this century are particularly ſtated, and carefully examined, through the many different ſtages of her real poverty and imaginary wealth. From thoſe diſtreſſes, as through uniform effects, the cauſes are traced. The diſcouragement of the woollen manufactures, by the Engliſh act of 1699, as the principal cauſe, is then conſidered; the objections ariſing from the difference of taxes in the two kingdoms removed; and the advantages that muſt ariſe to Great

Britain

Britain by the repeal of this law ſtated. It is then ſhewn that no equivalent was given to Ireland for the loſs of the woollen trade; that the encouragement of the linen manufacture was not an equivalent at the time, and if it was, has long ceaſed to be ſo. The principle of the act of 1699 is proved not to be juſtly applicable to Ireland, conſidered with a view to the natural productions, or to the ancient commercial ſyſtem of that kingdom; the many Engliſh and Iriſh ſtatutes which eſtabliſhed that ſyſtem are ſtated down to the year 1663, when

the

the commercial reſtraints firſt began. Thoſe which ariſe from the plantation laws, and which began in that year, are then conſidered, and their effects ſhewn on the manufacture, commerce, and navigation of Ireland. This ſyſtem of reſtraints, if it can be ſuppoſed to have been reaſonable at the time when it was introduced, is proved to be now ruinous to Ireland and to the Britiſh empire.

The advantages over Ireland, which Great Britain poſſeſſes in every branch of trade and manufacture,

are

are conſidered in the laſt place; and it is ſhewn that if the act of 1699 was repealed, ſhe would ſtill retain a great ſuperiority in the woollen trade. Several of the many other reſtrictions, under which Ireland labours, are alſo mentioned.

The diſcouragement of the woollen manufactures, and the plantation reſtraints, are principally inſiſted upon, becauſe they are thought to be the principal cauſe of its weakneſs and poverty; but it is not preſumed to draw any line on a ſubject under the conſideration of the legiſlatures

ſtatures of both kingdoms. Facts are ſtated, conſequences deduced, obſervations made, and the principal grievances are pointed out, the remedies are ſubmitted to thoſe who have the power to redreſs.

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THE

THE
COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS
OF
IRELAND
CONSIDERED.

FIRST LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

FIRST LETTER.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 20th Aug. 1779.

YOU deſire my thoughts on the affairs of Ireland; a ſubject little conſidered, and conſequently not underſtood in England. The Lords and Commons of Great Britain have addreſſed his Majeſty to take the diſtreſſed and impoveriſhed ſtate of this country into conſideration; have called for information, and reſolved to purſue effectual methods for promoting the common ſtrength, wealth and commerce of both kingdoms; and his Majeſty has been pleaſed to expreſs, in his ſpeech from the throne, his entire ap-

probation of their attention to the preſent ſtate of Ireland.

The occaſion calls for the aſſiſtance of every friend to the Britiſh empire: thoſe who can give material information are bound to communicate it. The attempt however is full of difficulty; it will require more than ordinary caution to write with ſuch moderation as not to offend the prejudices of one country, and with ſuch freedom as not to wound the feelings of the other.

The preſent ſtate of Ireland teems with every circumſtance of national poverty. Whatever the land produces is greatly reduced in its value: wool is fallen one half in its uſual price; wheat one third; black cattle of all kinds in the ſame proportion, and hides in a much greater: buyers are not had without difficulty at thoſe low rates, and from the principal fairs men commonly return with the commodities they brought there: rents are every where reduced, in many places it is impoſſible to collect them: the

the farmers are all diſtreſſed, and many of them have failed: when leaſes expire, tenants are not eaſily found: the landlord is often obliged to take his lands into his own hands, for want of bidders at reaſonable rents, and finds his eſtate fallen one fourth in its value. The merchant juſtly complains that all buſineſs is at a ſtand, that he cannot diſcount his bills, and that neither money nor paper circulates. In this and the laſt year, above twenty thouſand manufacturers, in this metropolis, were reduced to beggary for want of employment; they were for a conſiderable length of time ſupported by alms; a part of the contribution came from England, and this aſſiſtance was much wanting from the general diſtreſs of all ranks of people in this country. Public and private credit are annihilated: parliament, that always raiſes money in Ireland on eaſy terms, when there is any to be borrowed in the country, in 1778 gave 7½l. per cent. in annuities, which in 1773 and 1775 were earneſtly ſought after at 6l. then thought to be a very high rate. The expences of a country, nearly bankrupt,

muſt

muſt be inconſiderable; almoſt every branch of the revenue has fallen; and the receipts in the treaſury for the two years, ending lady-day, 1779, were leſs than thoſe for the two years, ending lady-day, 1777, deducting the ſums received on account of loans in each period, in a ſum of 334,900l. 18s. 9½d.: there was due on the 25th of March laſt, on the eſtabliſhments, and for extraordinary expences, an arrear amounting to 373,706l. 13s. 6½d.: a ſum of 600,000l. will probably be now wanting to ſupply the deficiencies on the eſtabliſhments and extraordinary charges of government: and an annual ſum of between 50 and 60,000l. yearly, to pay intereſt and annuities: in the laſt ſeſſion 466,000l. was borrowed; if the ſum wanting could now be raiſed, the debt would be increaſed in a ſum of above 1,000,000l. in leſs than three years, and if the expences and the revenues ſhould continue the ſame as in the laſt two years, there is a probability of an annual deficiency of 300,000l. The nation in the laſt two years has not been able to pay for its own defence; a militia law,

law, paſſed in the laſt ſeſſion, could not be carried into execution for want of money. Inſtead of paying forces abroad *, Ireland has not been able in this year to pay the forces kept in the kingdom: it has again relapſed into its ancient ſtate of imbecility, and Great Britain has been lately obliged to ſend over money to pay the army † which defends this impoveriſhed country.

Our diſtreſs and poverty are of the utmoſt notoriety; the proof does not depend ſolely upon calculation or eſtimate, it is palpable in every public and private tranſaction, and is deeply felt among all orders of our people.

This kingdom has been long declining. The annual deficiency of its revenues for the payment of the public expences, has been, for many years, ſupplied by borrowing.

* On account of the inability of Ireland, Great Britain ſince Chriſtmas, 1778, relieved her from the burden of paying forces abroad.

† A ſum of 50,000l. has been lately ſent from England for that purpoſe.

ing. The American rebellion, which conſiderably diminiſhed the demand for our linens; an embargo on proviſions continued for three years *, and highly injurious to our victualling trade; the increaſing drain of remittances to England for rents, ſalaries, profits of offices, penſions and intereſt, and for the payment of forces abroad, have made the decline more rapid, but have not occaſioned it.

If we are determined to inveſtigate the truth, we muſt aſſign a more radical cauſe: when the human or political body is unſound or infirm, it is in vain to inquire what accidental circumſtances appear to have occaſioned thoſe maladies which ariſe from the conſtitution itſelf.

If

* By a Proclamation, dated the 3d of February, 1776, on all ſhips and veſſels, laden in any of the ports in this kingdom, with proviſions of any kind, but not to extend to ſhips carrying ſalted beef, pork, butter and bacon into Great Britain, or proviſions to any part of the Britiſh empire, except the Colonies mentioned in the ſaid proclamation. 4th of January, 1779, taken off as far as it relates to ſhips carrying proviſions to any of the ports of Europe.

If in a period of fourſcore years of profound internal peace, any country ſhall appear to have often experienced the extremes of poverty and diſtreſs; if at the times of her greateſt ſuppoſed affluence and proſperity, the ſlighteſt cauſes have been ſufficient to obſtruct her progreſs, to annihilate her credit, and to ſpread dejection and diſmay among all ranks of her people; and if ſuch a country is bleſſed with a temperate climate and fruitful ſoil, abounds with excellent harbours and great rivers, with the neceſſaries of life and materials of manufacture, and is inhabited by a race of men, brave, active and intelligent, ſome permanent cauſe of ſuch diſaſtrous effects muſt be ſought for.

If your veſſel is frequently in danger of foundering in the midſt of a calm; if by the ſmalleſt addition of ſail ſhe is near overſetting, let the gale be ever ſo ſteady, you would neither reproach the crew, nor accuſe the pilot or the maſter; you would look to the conſtruction of the veſſel, and ſee how ſhe had been originally framed, and whether any new works had been added

added to her, that retard or endanger her courſe.

But for ſuch an examination more time and attention are neceſſary than have been uſually beſtowed upon this ſubject in Great Britain; and as I have now the honour to addreſs a perſon of rank and ſtation in that kingdom on the affairs of Ireland, I ſhould be brief in my firſt audience, or I may happen never to obtain the favour of a ſecond.

I have the honour to be, my lord, &c.

THE

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

SECOND LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

SECOND LETTER.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 23d Auguſt, 1779.

IF there is any ſuch permanent cauſe, from which the frequent diſtreſſes of ſo conſiderable a part of the Britiſh empire have ariſen, it is of the utmoſt conſequence that it ſhould be fully explained, and generally underſtood. Let us endeavour to trace it by its effects; theſe will manifeſtly appear by an attentive review of the ſtate of Ireland at different periods.

From the time that king James the Firſt had eſtabliſhed a regular adminiſtration of juſtice

juſtice in every part of the kingdom, until the rebellion of 1641, which takes in a period of between thirty and forty years, the growth of Ireland was conſiderable *. In the act recognizing the title of king James, the Lords and Commons acknowledge "that many bleſſings and benefits had, "within theſe few years paſt, been poured "upon this realm †;" and at the end of the parliament in 1615, the commons return thanks for the extraordinary pains taken for the good of this republic, whereby they ſay "we all of us ſit under our own vines, "and the whole realm reapeth the happy "fruits of peace ‡." In his reign the little that could be given by the people, was given with general conſent §: and received with extraordinary marks of royal favour; he

* Its tranquillity was ſo well eſtabliſhed in 1611, that king James reduced his army in Ireland to 176 horſe, and 1450 foot. Additional judges were appointed; circuits eſtabliſhed throughout the kingdom, 2d Cox, 17; and Sir John Davis obſerves, that no nation under the ſun loves equal and indifferent juſtice better than the Iriſh. Davis, p. 184, 196.

† 13 Jac. ch. i. ‡ 1 Vol. Com. Journ. p. 92.

§ Ib. 61.

he deſires the lord-deputy to return them thanks for their ſubſidy, and for their granting it with univerſal conſent*; and to aſſure them that he holds his ſubjects of that kingdom in equal favour with thoſe of his other kingdoms; and that he will be as careful to provide for their proſperous and flouriſhing ſtate, as for his own perſon.

Davis, who had ſerved him in great ſtations in this kingdom, and had viſited every province of it, mentions the proſperous ſtate of the country, and that the revenue of the crown, both certain and caſual, had been raiſed to a double proportion. He takes notice how this was effected, "by the "encouragement given to the maritime "towns and cities, as well to increaſe the "trade of merchandize, as to cheriſh me-"chanical arts;" and mentions the conſequence, "that the ſtrings of this Iriſh harp "were all in tune †."

In

* 1 Vol. Com. Journ. p. 88.

† Davis, p. 1, 193, 194.

In the ſucceeding reign, Ireland for fourteen or fifteen years appears to have greatly advanced in proſperity. The commons granted in the ſeſſion of 1634, ſix entire ſubſidies, which they agreed ſhould amount in the collection to 250,000l.*; and the free gifts previouſly given to king Charles the Firſt, at different times, amounted to 310,000l. †; in the ſeſſion of 1639, they gave four entire ſubſidies, and the clergy eight; the cuſtoms which had been farmed at 500l. yearly, in the beginning of this reign, were in the progreſs of it ſet for 54,000l.

The commodities exported were twice as much in value, as the foreign merchandize imported, and ſhipping is ſaid to have increaſed an hundred fold §. Their parliament was encouraged to frame laws conducive

* Cox's Hiſt. of Ireland, 2 Vol. 61. † Ib.

† Some of theſe ſubſidies, from the ſubſequent times of confuſion, were not raiſed.

‡ Cox, 2d Vol. p. 33.

§ Leland's Hiſt. of Ireland, 3d Vol. p. 41.

cive to the happineſs and proſperity of themſelves and their poſterities, for the enacting and "conſummating" whereof the king paſſes his royal word; and aſſures his ſubjects of Ireland that they were equally of as much reſpect and dearneſs to him as any others *.

In the ſpeaker's ſpeech in 1639, when he was offered for approbation to the lord-deputy, he mentions the free and happy condition of the people of Ireland; ſets forth the particulars; and in enumerating the national bleſſings, mentions as one, "that our in-gates and out-gates do ſtand open for trade and traffic †;" and as the lord chancellor declared his excellency's "high liking of this oration," it may be conſidered as a fair account of the condition of Ireland at that time. When the commons had afterwards caught the infection of the times, and were little diſpoſed to pay

* Lord Strafford's Letters, 2d Vol. p. 297.

† Ir. Com. Journ. 1ſt Vol. p. 228, 229.

compliments, they acknowledge, that this kingdom, when the earl of Strafford obtained the government, "was in a flouriſhing, "wealthy and happy eſtate*."

After the reſtoration, from the time that the acts of ſettlement and explanation had been fully carried into execution, to the year 1688, Ireland made great advances, and continued, for ſeveral years, in a moſt proſperous condition†. Lands were every where improved; rents were doubled; the kingdom abounded with money; trade flouriſhed to the envy of our neighbours; cities increaſed exceedingly; many places of the kingdom

* Lord Clarendon. Cox, ib. Ir. Com. Journ. 1 Vol. p. 280, 311.

† Archbiſhop King, in his State of the Proteſtants of Ireland, p. 52, 53, 445, 446. Lord Chief Juſtice Keating's Addreſs to James the Second, and his Letter to Sir John Temple, ib.

The prohibition of the exportation of our cattle to England, though a great, was but a temporary diſtreſs; and in its conſequences greatly promoted the general welfare of this country.

kingdom equalled the improvements of England; the king's revenue increaſed proportionably to the advance of the kingdom, which was every day growing, and was *well eſtabliſhed in plenty and wealth* *; manufactures were ſet on foot in divers parts; the meaneſt inhabitants were at once enriched and civilized: and this kingdom is then repreſented to be the moſt improved and improving ſpot of ground in Europe. I repeat the words of perſons of high rank, great character and ſuperior knowledge, who could not be deceived themſelves, and were incapable of deceiving others.

In the former of theſe periods, parliaments were ſeldom convened in Ireland; in the latter, they were ſuſpended for the ſpace of twenty-ſix years; during that time the Engliſh miniſters frequently ſhewed diſpoſitions unfavourable to the proſperity of this kingdom; and in the interval

 between

* Lord Sydney's words in his ſpeech from the throne, in 1692, from his own former knowledge of this country. Ir. Com. Journ. 2d Vol. p. 577.

between thoſe two periods, it had been laid waſte, and almoſt depopulated by civil rage and religious fury. And yet, after being bleſſed with an internal peace of ninety years, and with a ſucceſſion of five excellent ſovereigns, who were moſt juſtly the objects of our affection and gratitude, and to whom the people of this country were deſervedly dear; after ſo long and happy an intercourſe of protection grace and favour from the crown, and of duty and loyalty from the ſubjects, it would be difficult to find any ſubſequent period where ſo flattering a view has been given of the induſtry and proſperity of Ireland.

The cauſe of this proſperity ſhould be mentioned. James, the firſt duke of Ormond, whoſe memory ſhould be ever revered by every friend of Ireland, to heal the wound that this country had received by the prohibition of the export of her cattle to England, obtained from Charles the Second a letter *, dated the 23d of March 1667, by which

* Carte, 2 Vol. p. 342, 344.

which he directed that all reſtraints upon the exportation of commodities, of the growth or manufacture of Ireland, to foreign parts, ſhould be taken off, but not to interfere with the plantation laws, or the charters to the trading companies, and that this ſhould be notified to his ſubjects of this kingdom; which was accordingly done by a proclamation from the lord lieutenant and council; and at the ſame time, by his majeſty's permiſſion, they prohibited the importation from Scotland of linen, woollen, and other manufactures and commodities, as drawing large ſums of money out of Ireland, and a great hindrance to its manufactures. His grace ſucceſsfully executed his ſchemes of national improvement, having by his own conſtant attention, the exertion of his extenſive influence, and the moſt princely munificence, greatly advanced the woollen, and revived § the linen manufactures, which England

§ Lord Strafford laid the foundation of the linen manufacture in Ireland, but the troubles which ſoon after broke out had entirely ſtopped the progreſs of it.

England then encouraged in this kingdom, as a compenſation for the loſs of that trade of which ſhe had deprived; it and this encouragement, from that time to the revolution, had greatly increaſed the wealth and promoted the improvement of Ireland.

The tyranny and perſecuting policy of James the ſecond † after his arrival in Ireland, ruined its trade and revenue; the many great oppreſſions which the people ſuffered during the revolution had occaſioned almoſt the *utter deſolation* of the country. § But the nation muſt have been reſtored in the reign of William to a conſiderable degree of ſtrength and vigor: their exertions in raiſing ſupplies to a great amount, from the year 1692 to the year 1698, are ſome proof of it. They taxed their goods, their lands, their perſons, in ſupport of a prince whom they juſtly called their deliverer and defender, and

† Harris's Life of K. W. 116.

§ The Words of Lord Sydney, in his ſpeech from the throne in 1692. Com. Jour. 2 Vol. 576.

and of a government on which their own preſervation depended. Thoſe ſums were granted †, not only without murmur, but with the utmoſt chearfulneſs, and without any complaint of the inability, or repreſentation of the diſtreſſed ſtate of the country.

The money brought in for the army at the revolution, gave life to all buſineſs, and much ſooner than could have been expected retrieved the affairs of Ireland. This money furniſhed capitals for carrying on the manufactures of the kingdom. Our exports increaſed in 96, 97 and 98, and our imports did not riſe in proportion, which occaſioned a great balance in our favour; and this increaſe was owing principally to the woollen manufacture. In the laſt of thoſe years the ballance in favour of Ireland in the account of exports and imports was 419,442l §.

But in the latter end of this reign the political horizon was overcaſt, the national growth was checked, and the national vigor and induſtry

† Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 45 and 65, that great ſupplies were given during this period. § Dobbs, p. 5, 6, 7, 19.

duſtry impaired by the law made in England, reſtraining, in fact prohibiting the exportation of all woollen manufactures from Ireland. From the time of this prohibition no parliament was held in Ireland until the year 1703. Five years were ſuffered to paſs before any opportunity was given to apply a remedy to the many evils which ſuch a prohibition muſt neceſſarily have occaſioned. The linen-trade was then not thoroughly eſtabliſhed in Ireland; the woollen manufacture was the ſtaple trade, and wool the principal material of that kingdom. The conſequences of this prohibition appear in the ſeſſion of 1703 †. The commons § lay before queen Anne a moſt affecting repreſentation, containing, to uſe their own words "a true ſtate of our deplorable condition," proteſting that no groundleſs diſcontent was the motive for that application, but a deep ſenſe of the evil ſtate of their country, and of the farther miſchiefs they have reaſon to fear will fall

† Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 45.

§ Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 65, 66.

fall upon it, if not timely prevented. They ſet forth the vaſt decay and loſs of its trade, its being almoſt exhauſted of coin, that they are hindered from earning their livelihoods, and from maintaining their own manufactures, that their poor are thereby become very numerous; that great numbers of proteſtant families have been conſtrained to remove out of the kingdom, as well into Scotland as into the dominions of foreign princes and ſtates, and that their foreign trade and its returns are under ſuch reſtrictions and diſcouragements as to be then become in a manner impracticable, although that kingdom had by its blood and treaſure contributed to ſecure the plantation trade to the people of England.

In a further addreſs to the queen *, laid before the duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant, by the houſe with its ſpeaker, they mention the diſtreſſed condition of that kingdom, and more eſpecially of the induſtrious proteſtants,

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. 149.

proteſtants, by the almoſt total loſs of trade and decay of their manufactures, and to preſerve the country from utter ruin, apply for liberty to export their linen manufactures to the plantations.

In a ſubſequent part of this ſeſſion *, the commons reſolve, that by reaſon of the great decay of trade and diſcouragement of the manufactures of this kingdom, many poor tradeſmen were reduced to extreme want and beggary. This reſolution was *nem. con.* and the ſpeaker, Mr. Broderick, then his majeſty's ſolicitor general, and afterwards lord chancellor, in his ſpeech at the end of the ſeſſion†, informs the lord lieutenant, that the repreſentation of the commons was, as to the matters contained in it, the unanimous voice and conſent of a very full houſe, and that the ſoft and gentle terms uſed by the commons in laying the diſtreſſed condition of the kingdom before his majeſty, ſhewed that their complaints proceeded not from querulouſneſs, but

* Ir. Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 195. Ib. 207, 208.

but from a neceſſity of ſeeking redreſs; he adds, "it is to be hoped they may be allowed ſuch a proportion of trade, that "they may recover from the great poverty "they now lie under;" and in preſenting the bill of ſupply ſays, the commons have granted it "in time of extreme poverty." The impoveriſhed ſtate of Ireland, at that time, appears in the ſpeech from the throne at the concluſion of the ſeſſion, in which it is mentioned that the commons could not then provide for what was owing to the civil and military liſts *.

The ſupply given for two years, commencing at Michaelmas 1703 †, was a ſum not exceeding 150,000l. which, conſidering that no parliament was held in Ireland ſince the year 1698, is at the rate of 30,000l.—— yearly commencing in 1699, and ending in the year 1705.

The great diſtreſs of Ireland, from the year 1699, to the year 1703, and the cauſe of that diſtreſs, cannot be doubted.

Let

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 210. † Ib. 79, 94.

Let it now be conſidered, whether the ſame cauſe has operated ſince the year 1703. In the year 1704* it appears, that the commons were not able, from the circumſtances of the nation at that time, to make proviſion for repairing the neceſſary fortifications; or for arms and ammunition for the public ſafety: and the difficulties which the kingdom then laboured under, and the decay of trade appear by the addreſſes of the commons† to the queen, and to the duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant, who was well acquainted with the ſtate of this country; by the queen's anſwer‡, and the addreſs of thanks for it.

In the year 1707 §, the revenue was deficient for payment of the army, and defraying the charges of government; and the commons promiſe to ſupply the deficiency "as far as the preſent circumſtances of the "nation will allow."

In

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 298. † Ib. 225, 266.
‡ Ib. 253, 258. § Ib. 364, 368, 369.

In 1709, it appears * by the unanimous addreſs of the commons to the lord lieutenant, that the kingdom was in an impoveriſhed and exhauſted ſtate: in 1711 †, they expreſs their approbation of the frugality of the queen's adminiſtration, by which their expences were leſſened, and by that means the kingdom preſerved from taxes, which might have proved too weighty and burthenſome. In their addreſs to the lord lieutenant, at the cloſe of the ſeſſion, they requeſt, that he ſhould repreſent to her majeſty, that they had given all the ſupplies which her majeſty deſired, and which they, in their preſent condition, were able to grant ‡: and yet thoſe ſupplies amounted, for two years, to a ſum not exceeding 167,023l. 8s. 5d §; though powder magazines, the council chamber, the treaſury office, and other offices were then to be built.

From the ſhort parliament of 1713, nothing can be collected, but that the houſe was

* Com. Jour. 3 Vol. p. 573. † Ib. 827. ‡ Ib. 929.
§ Ib. 876.

was inflamed and divided by party diſſentions, and that the fear of danger to the ſucceſſion of the preſent illuſtrious family, excluded every other conſideration from the minds of the majority.

This laſt period, from the year 1699 to the death of queen Anne, is marked with the ſtrongeſt circumſtances of national diſtreſs and deſpondency. The repreſentatives of the people, who were the beſt judges, and ſeveral of whom were members of the houſe of commons before and after theſe reſtraints, have aſſigned the reaſon. No other can be aſſigned.

That the woollen manufactures were the great ſource of induſtry in Ireland, appears from the Iriſh ſtatute of the 17th and 18th of Charles II. ch. 15*; from the reſolutions

* In the ſame ſeſſion an act was made for the advancement of the linen manufacture, which ſhews that both kingdoms then thought (for theſe laws came to us through England) that each of theſe manufactures was to be encouraged in Ireland.

ſolutions of the commons in 1695*, for regulating thoſe manufactures; the reſolutions of the committee of ſupply in that ſeſſion†; and from the preamble to the Engliſh ſtatute of the 10th and 11th of William III. ch. 10; in which it is recited, that great quantities of thoſe manufactures were made, and were daily increaſing in Ireland, and were exported from thence to foreign markets.

Of the exportation of all thoſe manufactures the Iriſh were at once totally deprived: the linen manufacture, propoſed as a ſubſtitute, muſt have required the attention of many years before it could be thoroughly eſtabliſhed. What muſt have been the conſequences to Ireland in the mean time? the journals of the commons in queen Anne's reign have informed us. Compare this period with the three former, and you will prove this melancholy truth; that a country

* Ir. Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 725. † Ib. 733.

try will ſooner recover from the miſeries and devaſtation occaſioned by war, invaſion, rebellion, maſſacre, than from laws reſtraining the commerce, diſcouraging the manufactures, fettering the induſtry, and above all breaking the ſpirits of the people.

It would be injuſtice not to acknowledge that Great Britain has, for a long ſeries of years, made great exertions to repair the evils ariſing from theſe reſtraints. She has opened her great markets to part of the linen manufacture of Ireland; ſhe has encouraged it by granting, for a great length of time, large ſums of her own money † on the exportation of it; and under her protection, and by the perſevering induſtry of our people, this manufacture has attained to a great degree of perfection and proſperity, in ſome parts of this country. If the kind and conſtant attention of that great kingdom, with

† The ſums paid on the exportation of Iriſh linens from Great Britain, at a medium of twenty-nine years, from 1743 to 1773, amount to ſomething under 10,000l. yearly.—Ir. Com. Jour. 16 Vol. p. 374, the account returned from the inſpector general's office in Great Britain.

with which we are connected to this important object; or if the lenient courſe of time had at length healed thoſe wounds, which commercial jealouſy had given to the trade and induſtry of this country, it would not be a friendly hand to either kingdom that would attempt to open them: but, if upon every accident they bleed anew, they ſhould be carefully examined, and ſearched to the bottom. If the cauſe of the poverty and diſtreſs of Ireland in the reign of queen Anne has ſince continued to operate, though not always in ſo great a degree, yet ſufficient frequently to reduce to miſery, and conſtantly to check the growth and impair the ſtrength of that kingdom, and to weaken the force and to reduce the reſources of Great Britain; that man ought to be conſidered as a friend to the Britiſh empire, who endeavours to eſtabliſh this important truth, and to explain a ſubject ſo little underſtood. If in this attempt there ſhall appear no intention to raiſe jealouſies, inflame diſcontents, or agitate conſtitutional queſtions, it is hoped that thoſe letters may

be read without prejudice on one ſide of the water, and without paſſion or reſentment on the other.

I have the honour to be, my lord, &c.

THE

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

THIRD LETTER.

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THIRD LETTER.

My Lord,

Dublin, 25th Auguſt, 1779.

To an inquirer after truth, hiſtory ſince the year 1699 furniſhes very imperfect and often partial views of the affairs of Great Britain and Ireland. The latter has no profeſſed hiſtorian of its own ſince that æra, and is ſo ſlightly mentioned in the hiſtories of the former kingdom, that it ſeems to be introduced rather to ſhew the accuracy of the accomptant, than as an article to be read and examined; pamphlets are often written to ſerve occaſional purpoſes, and with an intention to miſrepreſent; and party writers

ters are not worthy of any regard. We muſt then endeavour to find ſome other guide, and look into the beſt materials for hiſtory, by conſidering the facts as recorded in the journals of parliament; theſe have evinced the poverty of Ireland for the firſt fourteen years of this century. That this poverty continued in the year 1716, appears by the unanimous addreſs of the houſe of commons to George the Firſt*. This addreſs was to congratulate his majeſty on his ſucceſs in extinguiſhing the rebellion, an occaſion moſt joyful to them, and on which no diſagreeable circumſtance would have been ſtated, had not truth and the neceſſities of their country extorted it from them. A ſmall debt of 16,106l. 11s. 0½d. †, due at Michaelmas 1715, was, by their exertions to ſtrengthen the hands of government in that year, increaſed at Midſummer 1717 to a ſum of 91537l. 17s. 1⅝d. §, which was conſidered as ſuch an augmentation of the national

* Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 249, † Ib. 296.
§ Ib. 335.

tional debt, that the lord lieutenant, the duke of Bolton, thought it neceſſary to take notice in his ſpeech from the throne, that the debt was conſiderably augmented, and to declare at the ſame time that his majeſty had ordered reductions in the military, and had thought proper to leſſen the civil liſt.

There cannot be a ſtronger proof of the want of reſources in any country, than that a debt of ſo ſmall an amount ſhould alarm the perſons intruſted with the government of it. That thoſe apprehenſions were well founded, will appear from the repeated diſtreſſes of Ireland, from time to time, for many years afterwards. In 1721, the ſpeech from the throne *, and the addreſſes to the king and to the lord lieutenant, ſtate, in the ſtrongeſt terms, the great decay of her trade, and the very low and impoveriſhed ſtate to which ſhe was reduced.

That

* Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 694, 700, 701.

That this proceeded, in ſome meaſure, from calamities and misfortunes which affected the neighbouring kingdoms, is true: but their effects on Ireland, little intereſted in the South Sea project, could not be conſiderable. The poverty under which ſhe laboured, aroſe principally from her own ſituation: The lord lieutenant ſays there is ground to hope that in this ſeſſion ſuch remedies may be applied, as will reſtore the nation to a flouriſhing condition; and the commons return the king thanks for giving them that opportunity to conſider of the beſt methods for reviving their decayed trade, and making them a flouriſhing and happy people.

But it is a melancholy proof of the deſponding ſtate of this kingdom, that no law whatever was then propoſed for encouraging trade or manufactures, or to follow the words of the addreſs, for reviving trade, or making us a flouriſhing people, unleſs that for amending the laws as to butter and tallow caſks deſerves to be ſo called; and why? becauſe it

was

was well underſtood by both houſes of parliament that they had no power to remove thoſe reſtraints which prohibited trade and diſcouraged manufactures, and that any application for that purpoſe would at that time have only offended the people on one ſide of the channel, without bringing any relief to thoſe on the other. The remedy propoſed by government, and partly executed, by directing a commiſſion under the great ſeal for receiving voluntary ſubſcriptions *, in order to eſtabliſh a bank, was a ſcheme to circulate paper without money; and conſidering that it came ſo ſoon after the ſouth ſea bubble had burſt, it is more ſurpriſing that it ſhould have been at firſt applauded †, than that it was in the ſame ſeſſion diſliked, cenſured and abandoned §. The total inefficacy of the remedy proved however the inveteracy of the diſeaſe, and furniſhes a farther proof of the deſperate ſituation of Ireland, when nothing could be thought of for its relief, but that

* Ir. Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 694. † Ib. 720.
§ Ib. 832.

that paper ſhould circulate without money, trade or manufactures *.

In the following ſeſſion of 1723, it appears that the condition of our manufacturers, and of the loweſt claſſes of our people, muſt have been diſtreſſed, as the duke of Grafton, in his ſpeech from the throne, particularly recommends to their conſideration the finding out of ſome method for the better employing of the poor †; and though the debt of the nation was no more than 66,318l. 8s. 3¼d. ‡ and was leſs than in the *laſt* ſeſſion §, yet the commons thought it neceſſary to preſent an addreſs to the king, to give ſuch directions as he, in his great goodneſs ſhould think proper, to prevent the increaſe of the debt of the nation. This addreſs was preſented ‖ by the houſe, with its

* It is not here intended to enter into the queſtion, whether in different circumſtances a national bank might not be uſeful to Ireland.

† Com. Jour. 5 Vol. p. 12. ‡ 5 Vol. p. 102.

§ It was then 77,261l. 6s. 7 d. 4 Vol. p. 778.

‖ Ib. 108.

its ſpeaker, and paſſed *nem. con.* and was occaſioned by the diſtreſſed ſtate of the country, and by their apprehenſions that it might be further exhauſted by the project of Woods's half-pence: it could not be meant as any want of reſpect to their lord lieutenant, as they had not long ſince returned him thanks for his wiſe conduct and frugality in not increaſing the debt of the nation*; this addreſs of the commons, and the lord lieutenant's recommendation for the better employing the poor, ſeems to be explained by a petition of the woollen-drapers, weavers and clothiers of the city of Dublin, (the principal ſeat of the woollen manufacture of Ireland) in behalf of themſelves and the other drapers, weavers and clothiers of this kingdom, praying relief in relation to the great decay of trade in the woollen manufacture †.

But this addreſs had no effect; the debt of the nation in the enſuing ſeſſion of 1725, was

* Com. Jour. 4 Vol. p. 16. † Ib. 136.

was nearly doubled*; in the ſpeeches from the throne in 1727, Lord Carteret takes notice of our ſucceſs in the linen trade, and yet obſerves in 1729, that the revenue had fallen ſhort, and that thereby a conſiderable arrear was due to the eſtabliſhment.

But notwithſtanding the ſucceſs of the linen manufacture†, Ireland was in a moſt miſerable condition. The great ſcarcity of corn had been ſo univerſal in this kingdom in the years 1728 and 1729, as to expoſe thouſands of families to the utmoſt neceſſities, and even to the danger of famine; many artificers and houſe-keepers having been obliged to beg for bread in the ſtreets of Dublin. It appeared before the houſe of commons that the import of corn for one year and ſix months, ending the 29th day of September, 1729, amounted in value to the ſum of 274,000l. an amazing ſum compared with the circumſtances of the kingdom at

* At midſummer, 1725, it amounted to 119,215l. 5s. 3½d. 5 Vol. Com. Jour. p. 282, 295. Ib. 434, 435, 642.

† Ib. 732, 755.

at that time! and the commons reſolve that public granaries would greatly contribute to the increaſing of tillage, and providing againſt ſuch wants as have frequently befallen the people of this kingdom, and hereafter may befall them, unleſs proper precautions ſhall be taken againſt ſo great a calamity.

The great ſcarcity which happened in the years 28 and 29, and frequently before and ſince, is a deciſive proof that the diſtreſſes of this kingdom have been occaſioned by the diſcouragement of manufactures; if the manufacturers have not ſufficient employment they cannot buy the ſuperfluous produce of the land; the farmers will be diſcouraged from tilling, and general diſtreſs and poverty muſt enſue. The conſequences of the want of employment among manufacturers and labourers muſt be more fatal in Ireland than in moſt other countries; of the numbers of her people it has been computed that 1,887,220 live in houſes with but one hearth, and may therefore be reaſonably

preſumed

preſumed to belong, for the moſt part, to thoſe claſſes.

In the year 1731 * there was a great deficiency in the public revenue, and the national debt had conſiderably increaſed. The exhauſted kingdom lay under great difficulties by the decay of trade, the ſcarcity of money and the univerſal poverty of the country, which the ſpeaker repreſents § in very affecting terms, in offering the money-bills for the royal aſſent, and adds, "that the com-" mons hope from his majeſty's goodneſs, " and his grace's *free* and *impartial* repreſen-" tation of the ſtate and condition of this " kingdom, that *they* may enjoy a *ſhare* of " the bleſſings of public tranquillity, by the " increaſe of their trade and the encourage-" ment of their manufactures."

But in the next ſeſſion, of 1733, they are told in the ſpeech from the throne, what this ſhare was to be. The lord lieutenant informs

* Duke of Dorſet's ſpeech from the throne, Com. Jour. 6 Vol. p. 12. § Ib. 143.

forms them that the peace cannot fail of contributing to their welfare, by enabling them to improve thoſe branches of trade and manufactures † which *are properly their own*, meaning the trade and manufacture of linen. Whether this idea of property has been preſerved inviolate will hereafter appear.

The years 40 and 41 were ſeaſons of great ſcarcity, and in conſequence of the want of wholeſome proviſions great numbers of our people periſhed miſerably, and the ſpeech from the throne recommends it to both houſes to conſider of proper meaſures to prevent the like calamity for the future. The employment of the poor and the encouragement of tillage, are the remedies propoſed § by the lord lieutenant and approved of by the commons, but no laws for thoſe purpoſes were introduced, and why they were not affords matter for melancholy conjecture. They could not have been inſenſible of the miſeries of their fellow-creatures; many thouſands

† Com. Jour. 6 v. 189.
7 V. Com. Jour. 214, 220, 222.

thouſands of whom were loſt in thoſe years, ſome from abſolute want, and many from diſorders occaſioned by bad proviſions. Why was no attempt made for their relief? becauſe the commons knew that the evil was out of their reach, that the poor were not employed becauſe they were diſcouraged by reſtrictive laws from working up the materials of their own country, and that agriculture could not be encouraged where the lower claſſes of the people were not enabled by their induſtry to purchaſe the produce of the farmer's labour.

For above forty years after making thoſe reſtrictive laws * Ireland was always poor and often in great want, diſtreſs and miſery, § tho' the linen manufacture had made great progreſs during that time. In the war before the laſt, ſhe was not able to give any aſſiſtance. The duke of Devonſhire, in the year 1741, takes

* The act intitled an act for better regulation of partnerſhips, and to encourage the trade and manufactures of this kingdom, has not a word relative to the latter part of the title.

§ Com. Jour. 6 v. 694, 7 v. 742.

takes notice from the throne, that during a war for the protection of the trade of all his majesty's dominions there had been no increase of the charge of the establishment; and in the year 1745 the country was so little able to bear expence, that lord Chesterfield discouraged and prevented any augmentation of the army, tho' much desired by many gentlemen of the house of commons, from a sense of the great danger that then impended. An influx of money after the peace, and the further success of the linen trade, encreased our wealth, and enabled us to reduce by degrees, and afterwards to discharge the national debt. This was not effected until the first of March 1754*. This debt was occasioned principally by the expences incurred by the rebellion in Great Britain in the year 1715; an unlimited vote

* The sum remaining due on the loans at lady-day 1753 was 85,585l 0s 9½d The whole credit of the nation to that day was 332,747l. 19s 1⅛d and, deducting the sums due on the loans, amounted to 247,162l 18s 3⅛d. Com. Jour. 9 v. 3, 349, 352.

of credit was then given §. From the lowneſs of the revenue, and the want of reſources, not from any further exertions on the part of the kingdom in point of expence, the debt of 16,106l 11s 0½d due in 1715, was encreaſed at Lady Day† 1733, to 371,312l 12s 2½d. That government and the houſe of commons ſhould for ſuch a length of time have conſidered the reduction and diſcharge of this debt as an object of ſo great importance, and that near forty years ſhould have paſſed, before the conſtant attention and ſtricteſt œconomy of both could have accompliſhed that purpoſe, is a ſtrong proof of the weakneſs and poverty of this country, during that period.

After the payment of this debt, the wealth and ability of Ireland were greatly overrated, both here and in Great Britain. The conſequences of this miſtaken opinion were encreaſed expences on the part of government

§ Com. Jour. vol. 4. 195.
† Com. Jour, vol. 6. 289.

ment and of the country, more than it was able to bear. The ſtrict œconomy of old times was no longer practiſed. The repreſentatives of the people ſet the example of profuſion, and the miniſters of the crown were not backward in following it. A large redundency of money in the treaſury, gave a deluſive appearance of national wealth. At Lady Day 1755 the ſum in credit to the nation was 471,404l 5s 6d$\frac{3}{8}$ ‖, and the money remaining in the treaſury of the ordinary unappropriated revenue on the 29th day of September 1755*, 457,959l 12s 7d$\frac{1}{8}$. But this great increaſe of revenue aroſe from an increaſe of imports, particularly in the year 1754, by which the kingdom was greatly overſtocked, and which raiſed the revenue in that year 208,309l 19s 2d$\frac{1}{4}$ higher than it was in the year 1748, when the revenue firſt began to riſe conſiderably †; and though what a nation ſpends is one method of eſtimating its wealth, yet a nation, like an indi-

 vidual,

‖ Com. Jour. 9 v. 352. * Ib. 332.
† Com. Jour. 10 Vol. 751.

vidual, may live beyond its means, and ſpend on credit which may far exceed its income. This was the fact as to Ireland in the year 1754, for ſome years before and for many years after; it appeared in an enquiry before the houſe of commons in the ſeſſion of 1755, that many perſons had circulated paper to a very great amount, far exceeding not only their own capitals*, but that juſt proportion which the quantity of paper ought to bear to the national ſpecie. This gave credit to many individuals, who without property became merchant importers, and at the ſame time increaſed the receipts of the treaſury and leſſened the wealth of the kingdom. At the very time that ſo great a balance was in the treaſury, public credit was in a very low way, and the houſe of commons was employed in preparing a law to reſtore it. In 54 and 55 three principal banks‡ had failed,

* Com. Jour. 9 v. 818. † Ib. 819, 829, 846, 865.

‡ March 6, 1754, Thomas Dillon and Richard Ferral, failed. 3d March 1755, William Lennox and George French. Same day John Wilcocks and John Dawſon.

failed and the legiſlature took up much time in enquiring into their affairs, and in framing laws for the relief of their creditors §. Yet in this ſeſſion, the liberality of the houſe of commons was exceſſive. The redundency in the treaſury had in the ſeſſion of 1753, occaſioned a diſpute between the crown and the houſe of commons on the queſtion, whether the king's previous conſent was neceſſary for the application of it. They wiſhed to avoid any future conteſt of that kind, and were flattered to grant the public money from enlarged views of national improvements. The making rivers navigable, the making and improving harbours, and the improvement of huſbandry and other uſeful arts, were objects worthy of the repreſentatives of the people; and had the faithfulneſs of the execution anſwered the goodneſs of the intention in many inſtances, the public in general might have had no great reaſon to complain. Many of thoſe grants prove the poverty of the country. There

§ There was then no Bankruptcy law in Ireland.

There were not private ſtocks to carry on the projects of individuals, nor funds ſufficient for incorporating and ſupporting companies, nor profits to be had by the undertakings ſufficient to reimburſe the money neceſſary to be expended. The commons therefore advanced the money, for the benefit of the public; and it can never be ſuppoſed that they would have continued to do ſo for above twenty years, if they were not convinced that there were not funds in the hands of individuals ſufficient to carry on thoſe uſeful undertakings, nor trade enough in the kingdom to make adequate returns to the adventurers.

Having gone through more than half the century, it is time to pauſe. In this long gloomy period, the poverty of Ireland appears to have been miſery and deſolation, and her wealth a ſymptom of decline and a prelude to poverty; the low retiring ebb from the ſpring-tide of deceitful

ceitful proſperity, has left our ſhores bare, and has opened a waſte and deſolate proſpect of barren ſand, and uncultivated country.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

THE

COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS

OF

IRELAND

CONSIDERED.

FOURTH LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

FOURTH LETTER.

MY LORD,

Dublin, 27th Auguſt, 1779.

THE revenue, for the reaſons already given, decreaſed in 1755†, fell lower in 1756, and ſtill lower in 57. In the laſt year the vaunted proſperity of Ireland was changed into miſery and diſtreſs; the lower claſſes of our people wanted food*; the money ariſing from

† Com. Jour. 10 v. 751.

* Ib. 10 v. 16. Speech from the throne, and ib. 25, addreſs from the houſe of commons to the king.

from the extravagance of the rich was freely applied to alleviate the ſufferings of the poor†. One of the firſt ſteps of the late duke of Bedford's adminiſtration, and which reflects honour on his memory, was obtaining a king's letter, dated 31ſt March 1757, for 20,000l to be laid out as his grace ſhould think the moſt likely to afford the moſt ſpeedy and effectual relief to his majeſty's poor ſubjects of this kingdom. His grace, in his ſpeech from the throne, humanely expreſſes his wiſh, that ſome method might be found out to prevent the calamities that are the conſequences of a want of corn, which had been in part felt the laſt year, and to which this country had been too often expoſed; the commons acknowledge that thoſe calamities had been frequently and were too ſenſibly and fatally experienced in the courſe of the laſt year, thank his grace for his early and charitable attention to the neceſſities of the poor of this country in their late diſtreſſes, and make uſe of thoſe remarkable expreſſions, "that "they

† Com. Jour. 10 vol. p. 25, Addreſs from the houſe of commons to the king.

" they will moſt chearfully embrace ‡ every " *practicable* method to promote tillage †, They knew that the encouragement of manufactures were the effectual means, and that theſe means were not in their power.

The ability of the nation was eſtimated by the money in the treaſury, and the penſions on the civil eſtabliſhment, excluſive of French, which at Lady-day 1755, were 38,003l. 15s. 0d. amounted at Lady-day 57, to 49,293l. 15s. 0d §,

The ſame ideas were entertained of the reſources of this country in the ſeſſion of 1759. Great Britain had made extraordinary

‡ Com. Jour. 10 vol. 25.

† They brought in a law for the encouragement of tillage, which was ineffectual (ſee poſt 42) but the preamble of that act is a legiſlative proof of the unhappy condition of the poor of this country before that time. The preamble recites, " the *extreme* neceſſity to which the poor " of this kingdom had been too frequently reduced for " want of proviſions."

§ Com. Jour. 10 vol. 285.

nary efforts, and engaged in enormous expences for the protection of the whole empire. This country was in immediate danger of an invaſion. Every Iriſhman was agreed that ſhe ſhould aſſiſt Great Britain to the utmoſt of her ability, but this ability was too highly eſtimated. The nation abounded rather in loyalty than in wealth †. Our brethren in Great Britain, had, however, formed a different opinion, and ſurveying their own ſtrength, were incompleat judges of our weakneſs. A lord lieutenant of too much virtue and magnanimity to ſpeak what he did not think, takes notice from the throne, "of the proſperous ſtate of this "country, improving daily in its manufactures and commerce ‖." His grace had done much to bring it to that ſtate, by obtaining for us ſome of the beſt laws * in our books of ſtatutes. But this part of the ſpeech was not taken notice of, either in the addreſs to

† 11 V. 472, Speaker's ſpeech. ‖ 11 V. 16.

* The acts paſſed in 58, giving bounties on the land-carriage of corn, and on coals brought to Dublin.

to his majeſty, or to his grace, from a houſe of commons well-diſpoſed to give every mark of duty and reſpect, and to pay every compliment conſiſtent with truth. The event proved the wiſdom of their reſerve. The public expences were greatly increaſed, the penſions on the civil eſtabliſhment excluſive of French, at Lady-day 1759, amounted to 55,497l. 5s. od.* there was at the ſame time a great augmentation of military expence†. Six new regiments and a troop were raiſed in a very ſhort ſpace of time. An unanimous and unlimited addreſs of confidence to his grace‡, a ſpecifick vote of credit for 150,000l.‖, which was afterwards provided for in the loan-bill§ of that ſeſſion, a ſecond vote of credit in the ſame ſeſſion for 300,000l.**, the raiſing the rate of intereſt paid by government, one per cent. and the payment out of the treaſury†† in little more than one year, of 703,957l 3s 1½d‡‡ were

* Com. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 212. † Ib. from 826, to 837.
‡ Vol. 11, p. 141. ‖ Ib. 408. § Ib. 473.
** Ib. 862. †† Ib. ‡‡ Ib. 982, from 25th March 59, to 21ſt of April 60, excluſive.

were the conſequences of thoſe encreaſed expences. The effects of theſe exertions were immediately and ſeverely felt by the kingdom. Theſe loans could not be ſupplied by a poor country, without draining the bankers of their caſh; three of the principal houſes* among them ſtopped payment; the three remaining banks in Dublin diſcounted no paper, and in fact, did no buſineſs. Public and private credit, that had been drooping ſince the year 1754, had now fallen proſtrate. At a general meeting of the merchants of Dublin, in April 1760, with ſeveral members of the houſe of commons, the inability of the former to carry on buſineſs was univerſally acknowledged, not from the want of capital, but from the ſtoppage of all paper circulation, and the refuſal of the remaining bankers to diſcount the bills even of the firſt houſes. The merchants and traders of Dublin, in their petition§ to the houſe of commons, repreſent

* Clements's, Dawſon's and Mitchell's.

§ Com. Jour. 11 Vol. 966. April 15, 1760.

ſent "the low ſtate to which public and "private credit had been of late reduced in "this kingdom, and particularly in this "city, of which the ſucceſſive failures of "ſo many banks, and of private traders in "different parts of this kingdom, in ſo "ſhort a time as ſince October laſt, were "inconteſtable proofs. The petitioners, "ſenſible that the neceſſary conſequences "of theſe misfortunes muſt be the loſs of "foreign trade, the diminution of his ma-"jeſty's revenue, and what is ſtill more "fatal, the decay of the manufactures of "this kingdom, have in vain repeatedly "attempted to ſupport the ſinking credit "of the nation by aſſociations and other-"wiſe; and are ſatisfied that no reſource "is now left but what may be expected "from the wiſdom of parliament, to avert "the calamities with which this kingdom is "at preſent threatened."

The committee, to whom it was referred, reſolve * that they had proved the ſeveral

* Com. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 993, 994.

matters alledged in their petition; that the quantity of paper circulating was not near ſufficient for ſupporting the trade and manufactures of this kingdom; and that the houſe ſhould engage, to the firſt of May 62, for each of the then ſubſiſting banks in Dublin, to the amount of 50,000l. for each bank; and that an addreſs ſhould be preſented to the lord lieutenant, to thank his grace for having given directions that banker's notes ſhould be received as caſh from the ſeveral ſubſcribers to the loan, and that he would be pleaſed to give directions that their notes ſhould be taken as caſh in all payments at the treaſury, and by the ſeveral collectors for the city and county of Dublin. The houſe agreed to thoſe reſolutions, and to that for giving credit to the banks, *nem. con.*

The ſpeech from the throne takes notice of the care the houſe of commons had taken for eſtabliſhing public credit, which the lord lieutenant ſays he flatters himſelf will anſwer the end propoſed, and effect that circulation

culation ſo neceſſary for carrying on the commerce of the country *.

Thoſe facts are not ſtated as any imputation on the then chief governor: the vigour of his mind incited him to make the crown as uſeful as poſſible to the ſubject, and the ſubject to the crown. He ſucceeded in both, but in the latter part of the experiment the weakneſs of the country was ſhewn. The great law which we owe to his interpoſition, I ſpeak of that which gives a bounty on the land carriage of corn and flour to Dublin †, has ſaved this country from utter deſtruction; this law, which reflects the higheſt honour on the author and promoter, is ſtill a proof of the poverty of that country where ſuch a law is neceſſary. Its true principle is to bring the market of Dublin to the door of the farmer, and that was done in the year ending the 25th of March 1777 at the expence of 61789l. 18s. 6d. to

 the

* Com. Jour. 11 Vol. p. 1049.

† Brought in by Mr. Pery, the preſent Speaker.

the public; a large but a moſt uſeful and neceſſary expenditure*. The adoption of this principle proves, what we in this country know to be a certain truth, that there is no other market in Ireland on which the farmer can rely for the certain ſale of his corn and flour; a deciſive circumſtance to ſhew the wretched ſtate of the manufactures of this kingdom.

In the beginning of the next parliament, the rupture with Spain occaſioned a new augmentation of military expence. The ever loyal commons return an addreſs of thanks to the meſſage mentioning the addition of five new battalions†, and unanimouſly promiſe to provide for them; and with the ſame unanimity paſs a vote of credit for 200,000l §. The amount of penſions on the civil eſtabliſhment, excluſive of French,

* In the year ending lady-day 1778 it amounted to 71,533l. 1s., and in that ending lady-day 1779 to 67864l. 8s. 10d.

† Com. Jour. 12 Vol. p. 700. § Ib. 728.

French, had for one year ending the 25th of March 1761 amounted to 64,127l. 5s.‡ and our manufacturers were then diſtreſſed by the expence and havock of a burthenſome war *.

In the year 1762 a national evil made its appearance, which all the exertions of the government and of the legiſlature have not ſince been able to eradicate; I mean the riſings of the White Boys. They appear in thoſe parts of the kingdom where manufactures are not eſtabliſhed, and are a proof of the poverty and want of employment of the lower claſſes of our people. Lord Northumberland mentions, in his ſpeech from the throne † in 1763, that the means of induſtry would be the remedy; from whence it ſeems to follow that the want of thoſe means muſt be the cauſe. To attain this great end the commons promiſe their attention

‡ Com. Journ. 12 Vol. p. 443.

* Ib. 929, Speech of Lord Hallifax from the throne, 30th April, 1762.

† Ir. Com. Journ. 13 Vol. p. 21.

tion to the proteſtant charter ſchools and linen manufacture‡. The wretched men, who were guilty of thoſe violations of the law, were too mature for the firſt, and totally ignorant of the ſecond; but long eſtabliſhed uſage had given thoſe words a privilege in ſpeeches and addreſſes to ſtand for every thing that related to the improvement of Ireland.

The ſtate of penſions remained nearly the ſame*; by the peace the military expences were conſiderably reduced; of the military eſtabliſhmeut to be provided for in the ſeſſion 1763, compared with the military eſtabliſhment as it ſtood on the 31ſt of March 1763, the net decreaſe was 119,037l. 0s. 10d. per annum; but as a peace eſtabliſhment it was high, and compared with that of the 31ſt of March 1756†, being the year preceding

‡ Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 23.

* For a year ending 25th March 1763 they were 66,477l. 5s.; they afterwards roſe to 89,095l. 17s. 6d. in September 1777 at the higheſt; and in this year, ending the 25th March laſt, amounted to 85,971l. 2s. 6d.

† Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 576.

ceding the laſt war, the annual increaſe was 110,422l. 9s. 5½d. the debt of the nation at lady-day 1763, and which was entirely incurred in the laſt war, was 521,161l. 16s. 6⅞d.* and would have been much greater if the ſeveral lord lieutenants had not uſed with great œconomy the power of borrowing, which the houſe of commons had from ſeſſion to ſeſſion given them.

That this debt ſhould have been contracted in an expenſive war, in which Ireland was called upon for the firſt time to contribute, is not to be wondered at, but the continual increaſe of this debt, in ſixteen years of peace, ſhould be accounted for.

The ſame miſtaken eſtimate of the ability of Ireland, that occaſioned our being called upon to bear part of the Britiſh burthen during the war, produced ſimilar effects at the time of the peace, and after it.

* Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 574. 621.

it. The heavy peace eſtabliſhment was increaſed by an augmentation of our army in 1769, which induced an additional charge, taking in the expences of exchange and remittance, of 54,118l. 12s. 6d. yearly, for the firſt year; but this charge was afterwards conſiderably increaſed, and amounted from the year 1769 to Chriſtmas 1778, when it was diſcontinued, to the ſum of 620,824l. os. 9¼d.; and this increaſed expence was more felt, becauſe it was for the purpoſe of paying forces out of this kingdom.

As our expences increaſed our income diminiſhed; the revenue for the two years, ending the 25th of March 1771 *, was far ſhort of former years, and not nearly ſufficient to pay the charges of government, and the ſums payable for bounties and public works†. The debt of the nation at lady-day 1771, was increaſed to 782,320l. os. o¼d‡. The want of income was endeavoured to be ſupplied by a loan. In the money-bill of the October

* Com. Jour. 14 Vol. p. 715. † 15 Vol. p. 710.
‡ Ib. p. 153,

October ſeſſion 1771, there was a clauſe impowering government to borrow 200,000l. Immediately after the linen trade declined rapidly; in 1772, 1773, and 1774, the decay in that trade was general in every part of the kingdom where it was eſtabliſhed; the quantity manufactured was not above two thirds of what uſed formerly to be made, and that quantity did not ſell for above three-fourths of its former price; the linen and linen yarn exported for one year, ending the 25th of March 1773 ‡, fell ſhort of the exports of one year, ending the 25th of March 1771, to the amount in value of 788,821l. 1s. 3d. At lady-day 1773 *, the debt increaſed to 994,890l. 10s. 10⅓d. The attempt in the ſeſſion of 1773 †, to equalize the annual income and expences failed, and borrowing on tontine in the ſeſſions of 1773, 1775 and 1777, added greatly to the annual expence, and to the ſums of money remitted out of the kingdom. The debt now bearing intereſt

‡ Com. Jour. 16 Vol. p. 372. * Ib. p. 190, 191, 193.
† Ib. 256.

intereſt amounts to the ſum of 1,017,600l. beſides a ſum of 740,000l. raiſed on annuities, which amount to 48,900l. yearly, with ſome incidental expences. The great increaſe of thoſe national burdens, likely to take place in the approaching ſeſſion, has been already mentioned.

The debt of Ireland has ariſen from the following cauſes: the expences of the late war, the heavy peace eſtabliſhment in the year 1763, the increaſe of that eſtabliſhment in the year 1769, the ſums paid from 1759 to forces out of the kingdom, the great increaſe of penſions and other additional charges on the civil eſtabliſhment, which however conſiderable, bears but a ſmall proportion to the increaſed military expences, the falling of the revenue, and the ſums paid for bounties and public works; theſe are mentioned laſt, becauſe it is apprehended that they have not operated to increaſe this debt in ſo great a degree as ſome perſons have imagined; for though the amount is large, yet no part of the money

was

was ſent out of the kingdom, and ſeveral of the grants were for uſeful purpoſes, ſome of which made returns to the public and to the treaſury exceeding the amount of thoſe grants.

When thoſe facts are conſidered, no doubt can be entertained but that the ſuppoſed wealth of Ireland has led to real poverty; and when it is known, that from the year 1751 to Chriſtmas 1778 the ſums, remitted by Ireland to pay troops ſerving abroad, amounted to the ſum of 1,401,925l. 19s. 4d. it will be equally clear from whence this poverty has principally ariſen.

In thoſe ſeaſons of expence and borrowing, the lower claſſes were equally ſubject to poverty and diſtreſs, as in the periods of national œconomy. In 1762 lord Hallifax, in his ſpeech from the throne*, acknowledges that our manufactures were diſtreſſed by the war. In 1763, the corporation

* Com. Jour. 12 Vol. p. 928.

tion of weavers, by a petition to the houſe of commons, complain that, notwithſtanding the great increaſe both in number and wealth of the inhabitants of the metropolis, they found a very great decay of ſeveral very valuable branches of trade and manufactures * of this city, particularly in the ſilken and woollen.

In 1765 there was a ſcarcity cauſed by the failure of potatoes in general throughout the kingdom, which diſtreſſed the common people; the ſpring corn had alſo failed, and grain was ſo high, that it was thought neceſſary to appoint a committee † to inquire what may be the beſt method to reduce it; and to prevent a great dearth, two acts were paſſed early in that ſeſſion, to ſtop the diſtillery, and to prevent the exportation of corn, for a limitted time. In ſpring 1766 thoſe fears appeared to have been well-founded; ſeveral towns were in great diſtreſs for corn; and by the humanity of the lord

* Com. Jour. 13 Vol. p. 987.
† Ib. 14 Vol. p. 69, 114, 151.

lord lieutenant, lord Hertford, money was iſſued out of the treaſury to buy corn for ſuch places as applied to his lordſhip for that relief.

The years 1770 and 1771 were ſeaſons of great diſtreſs in Ireland, and in the month of February in the latter year, the high price of corn is mentioned from the throne*, as an object of the firſt importance, which demanded the utmoſt attention.

In 1778 and 1779 there was great plenty of corn, but the manufacturers were not able to buy, and many thouſands of them were ſupported by charity; the conſequence was that corn fell to ſo low a price that the farmers in many places were unable to pay their rents, and every where were under great difficulties.

That the linen manufacture has been of the utmoſt conſequence to this country, that

* Com. Jour. 14 Vol. p. 665.

that it has greatly proſpered, that it has been long encouraged by the protection of Great Britain, that whatever wealth Ireland is poſſeſſed of ariſes, for the moſt part, from that trade, is freely acknowledged; but in far the greateſt part of the kingdom it has not yet been eſtabliſhed, and many attempts to introduce it have, after long perſeverance and great expence, proved fruitleſs.

Though that manufacture made great advances from 1727 to 1758 *, yet the tillage of this kingdom declined during the whole of that period, and we have not ſince been free from ſcarcity.

Notwithſtanding the ſucceſs of that manufacture, the bulk of our people have always continued poor, and in a great many ſeaſons have wanted food. Can the hiſtory of any other fruitful country on the globe, enjoying peace for fourſcore years, and not viſited by plague or peſtilence, produce ſo many

* Com. Jour. 16 Vol. p. 467, report from committee, nd ib. 501 agreed to by the houſe, *nem. con.*

many recorded inſtances of the poverty and wretchedneſs, and of the reiterated want and miſery of the lower orders of the people? There is no ſuch example in ancient or modern ſtory. If the ineffectual endeavours by the repreſentatives of thoſe poor people to give them employment and food, had not left ſufficient memorials of their wretchedneſs; if their habitations, apparel, and food were not ſufficient proofs, I ſhould appeal to the human countenance for my voucher, and reſt the evidence on that hopeleſs deſpondency that hangs on the brow of unemployed induſtry.

That ſince the ſucceſs of the linen manufacture, the money and the rents of Ireland have been greatly increaſed, is acknowledged; but it is affirmed, and the fact is of notoriety, that the lower orders, not of that trade, are not leſs wretched. Thoſe employed in the favoured manufacture generally buy from that country to which they principally ſell; and the riſe in lands is a misfortune to the poor, where their wages do

do not riſe proportionably, which will not happen where manufactures and agriculture are not ſufficiently encouraged. Give premiums by land or by water, arrange your exports and imports in what manner you will; if you diſcourage the people from working up the principal materials of their country, the bulk of that people muſt ever continue miſerable, the growth of the nation will be checked, and the ſinews of the ſtate enfeebled.

I have ſtated a tedious detail of inſtances, to ſhew that the ſufferings of the lower claſſes of our people have continued the ſame (with an exception only of thoſe employed in the linen trade) ſince the time of queen Anne, as they were during her reign; that the cauſe remains the ſame, namely, that our manufacturers have not ſufficient employment, and cannot afford to buy from the farmer, and that therefore manufactures and agriculture muſt both be prejudiced.

After

After revolving thoſe repeated inſtances, and almoſt continued chain of diſtreſs, for ſuch a ſeries of years, among the inhabitants of a temperate climate, ſurrounded by the bounties of providence and the means of abundance, and being unable to diſcover any accidental or natural cauſes for thoſe evils, we are led to inquire whether they have ariſen from the miſtaken policy of man.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

FIFTH LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

FIFTH LETTER.

My Lord,

Dublin, 30th Aug. 1779.

EVERY man of diſcernment, who attends to the facts which have been ſtated, would conclude, that there muſt be ſome political inſtitutions in this country counteracting the natural courſe of things, and obſtructing the proſperity of the people. Thoſe inſtitutions ſhould be conſidered, that as from the effects the cauſe has been traced, this alſo ſhould be examined, to ſhew that ſuch conſequences are neceſſarily deducible from it. For ſeveral years the

the exportation of live cattle to England* was the principal trade of Ireland. This was thought moſt erroneouſly,‡ as has ſince been acknowledged§, to lower the rents of lands in England. From this and perhaps from ſome leſs worthy motive** a law paſſed in England††, to reſtrain and afterwards to prohibit the exportation of cattle from Ireland. The Iriſh deprived of their principal trade, and reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs by this prohibition, had no reſource but to work up their own commodities, to which they applied themſelves with great ardor‡‡. After this prohibition they increaſed their number of ſheep, and at the revolution were poſſeſſed of very numerous flocks. They had good

* Carte, 2 vol. 318, 319.

‡ Sir W. Petty's Political Survey, 69, 70. Sir W. Temple, 3 vol. 22, 23.

§ By ſeveral Britiſh acts (32 G. 2, ch. 11. 5 G. 3, ch. 10. 12 G. 3, ch. 56.) allowing from time to time the free importation of all ſorts of cattle from Ireland.

** Perſonal prejudice againſt the duke of Ormond. (2 Carte, 332, 337.

†† 15 Ch. 2, ch. 7. 18 Ch. 2, ch. 2.

‡‡ 2 Carte, 332.

good reaſons to think that this object of induſtry was not only left open, but recommended to them. The ineffectual attempt by lord Strafford in 1639, to prevent the making of broad cloths in Ireland*, the relinquiſhment of that ſcheme by never afterwards reviving it, the encouragement given to their woollen manufactures by many Engliſh acts of parliament from the reign of Edward the 3d† to the 12th of Ch. 2d, and ſeveral of them for the expreſs purpoſe of exportation; the letter of Charles the 2d, in 1667, with the advice of his privy council in England, and the proclamation in purſuance of that letter, encouraging the exportation of their manufactures to foreign countries; by the Iriſh ſtatutes of the 13th Hen. 8, ch. 2, 28th Hen. 8, ch. 17, of the 11th Elizabeth, Ch. 10, and 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 15, (all of which, the act of 28 Henry 8th excepted, received the approbation of the privy council of England, having been returned

* Com. Jour. 1 vol. p. 208, by a clauſe to be inſerted in an Iriſh act.

† See poſt, thoſe acts ſtated.

turned under the great ſeal of that kingdom) afforded as ſtrong grounds of aſſurance as any country could poſſeſs for the continuance of any trade or manufacture.

Great numbers of their flocks had been deſtroyed at the time of the revolution, but they were replaced at great expence, and became more numerous and flouriſhing than before. The woollen manufacture was cultivated in Ireland for ages before, and for ſeveral years after the revolution, without any appearance of jealouſy from England, the attempt by lord Strafford excepted. No diſcouragement is intimated in any ſpeech from the throne until the year 1698, lord Sydney's in 1692 imparts the contrary, "their "majeſties, ſays he*, being in their own royal judgments ſatisfied that a country ſo "fertile by nature, and ſo advantageouſly "ſituated for *trade and navigation*, can want "nothing but the bleſſing of peace, and the "help of ſome good laws to make it as rich "and flouriſhing *as moſt of its neighbours*; I am "ordered to aſſure you, that nothing ſhall "be

* Com. Journ. Vol. p. 576.

" be wanting on their parts that may con-
" tribute to your perfect and lasting hap-
" pineſs."

Several laws had been made * in England to prevent the exportation of wool, yarn made of wool, fuller's earth, or any kind of ſcowering earth or fulling clay from England or Ireland, into any places out of the kingdoms of England or Ireland. But thoſe laws were equally reſtrictive on both kingdoms.

In the firſt year ‡ of William and Mary certain ports were mentioned in Ireland, from which only wool ſhould be ſhipped from that kingdom, and certain ports in England into which only it ſhould be imported; and a regiſter was directed to be kept in the cuſtomhouſe of London of all the wool, from time to time, imported from Ireland. By a ſubſequent act in this reign †, paſſed in 1696, the commiſſioners or farmers of the cuſtoms in

* Engliſh acts, 12 Ch. 2 ch. 32. 13 and 14 Ch. 2 ch. 18.
‡ 1 W. and M. Ch. 32. † 7 and 8 W. ch. 28.

in Ireland are directed, once in every ſix months, to tranſmit to the commiſſioners of cuſtoms in England, an account of all wool exported from Ireland to England, and this laſt act, in its title, profeſſes the intention of encouraging the importation of wool from Ireland. The prohibition of exporting the materials from either kingdom, except to the other, and the encouragement to export it from Ireland to England, mentioned in the title of the laſt-mentioned act, but for which no proviſion ſeems to be made, unleſs the deſignation of particular ports may be ſo called, was the ſyſtem that then ſeemed to be ſettled, for preventing the wool of Ireland from being prejudicial to England; but the prevention of the exportation of the manufacture was an idea that ſeemed never to have been entertained until the year 1697, when a bill for that purpoſe was brought into the Engliſh houſe of commons*, and paſſed that houſe; but after great conſideration was not paſſed by the lords in that parliament.

* 14th Jan. 1697.

parliament †. There does not appear to have been any increaſe at that time in the woollen manufacture of Ireland, ſufficient to have raiſed any jealouſy in England.

By a report from the commiſſioners of trade in that kingdom, dated on the 23d December 97, and laid before the houſe of commons, in 1698 they find that the woollen manufacture in Ireland had increaſed ſince the year 1665, as follows:

Years.	New draperies Pieces.	Old draperies. Pieces.	Frize Yards.
1665	224	32	444,381
1687	11,360	103	1,129,716
1696	4,413	34 $\frac{3}{4}$	104,167

The bill for reſtraining the exportation of woollen manufactures from Ireland was brought into the Engliſh houſe of commons on the 23d of Feb. 97, but the law did not paſs until the year 1699, in the firſt ſeſſion of the new parliament. I have not been able

† 7 July 1698 diſſolved

able to obtain an account of the exportation of woollen manufactures for the year 1697 †, but from the 25th of December 1697, to the 25th of December 1698, being the firſt year in which the exports in books extant, are regiſtered in the cuſtom-houſe at Dublin, the amount appears to be of

New drapery.	Old drapery.	Frize.
Pieces.	Pieces.	Yds.
23,285½	281½	666,901

though this encreaſe of export ſhews that the trade was advancing in Ireland, yet the total amount or the comparative increaſe ſince

† In a pamphlet cited by Dr. Smith, (v. 2, p. 244.) in his memoirs, of wool it is ſaid that the total value of thoſe manufactures exported in 1697, was 23,614l 9s 6d namely, in frizes and ſtockings 14,625l 12s; in old and new draperies 8988l 17s 6d, and that though the Iriſh had been every year increaſing yet they had not recovered above one third of the woollen trade which they had before the war (ib. 243). The value in 1687, according to the ſame authority, was 70,521l 14s, of which the frizes were 56,485l 16s. Stockings 2520l. 18s, and old and new drapery (which it is there ſaid could alone interfere with the Engliſh trade) 11,514l 10s.

ſince 1687 could ſcarcely "ſink the value of "lands, and tend to the ruin of the trade "and woollen manufactures of England §."

The apprehenſions of England ſeem rather to have ariſen from the fears of future, than from the experience of any paſt rivalſhip in this trade. I have more than once heard lord Bowes, the late chancellor of this kingdom, mention a converſation that he had with ſir Robert Walpole on this ſubject, who aſſured him that the jealouſies entertained in England, of the woollen trade in Ireland, and the reſtraints of that trade had at firſt taken their riſe from the boaſts of ſome of our countrymen in London, of the great ſucceſs of that manufacture here. Whatever was the cauſe, both houſes of parliament in England addreſſed king William, in very ſtrong terms, on this ſubject; but on conſidering thoſe addreſſes they ſeem to be founded, not on the ſtate at that time of that manufacture here, but the probability of

§ Preamble of Engliſh act of 1699.

of its further increaſe. As thoſe proceedings are of great importance to two of the principal manufactures of this country, it is thought neceſſary to ſtate them particularly. The lords repreſent, "that the *growing* manufacture of cloth in Ireland ‡, both by the "cheapneſs of all ſorts of neceſſaries for "life, and *goodneſs of materials for making all* "*manner of cloth*, doth invite your ſubjects "of England with their families and ſervants to leave their habitations to ſettle "there, to the increaſe of the woollen manufacture in Ireland, which makes your "loyal ſubjects in this kingdom very apprehenſive that *the further growth* of it *may* "greatly prejudice the ſaid manufacture "here; by which the trade of the nation "and the value of lands will very much decreaſe, and the numbers of your people be "much leſſened here;" they then beſeech his majeſty "in the moſt public and effectual way, that may be, to declare to all "your ſubjects of Ireland, that the *growth* "and

‡ 9th June 1698, vol. of lords journals, page 314.

" and *increaſe* of the woollen manufacture " hath long, and will ever be looked upon " with jealouſy, by all your ſubjects of this " kingdom; *and if not timely remedied* may " occaſion very ſtrict laws, totally to prohi- " bit and ſuppreſs the ſame; and on the " other hand if they turn their induſtry and " ſkill, to the ſettling and improving the " linen manufacture, for which generally " the lands of that kingdom are very pro- " per, they ſhall receive all countenance, fa- " vour and protection from your *royal influ-* " *ence*, for the encouragement and promo- " ting of the ſaid linen manufacture, to *all* " *the advantage and profit that kingdom can be* " *capable of.*"

King William in his anſwer ſays, "his majeſty will take care to do what their lordſhips have deſired;" and the lords direct that the lord chancellor ſhould order that the addreſs and anſwer be forthwith printed and publiſhed §.

In

§ Lord's Jour. page 315.

In the addreſs of the commons § they ſay, that "being ſenſible that the wealth and "peace of this kingdom do, in a great mea-"ſure, depend on preſerving the woollen "manufacture, as much as poſſible, *entire* "to this realm, they think it becomes them, "like their anceſtors, to be jealous of the "*eſtabliſhment* and *increaſe* thereof elſewhere; "and to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to pre-"vent it, and therefore, they cannot with-"out trouble obſerve, that Ireland, depen-"dant on, and protected by England in the "enjoyment of all they have, and which is "ſo proper for the linen manufacture, the "eſtabliſhment and growth of which there "would be ſo enriching to themſelves, and "ſo profitable to England, ſhould *of late* "apply itſelf to the woollen manufacture, "to the great prejudice of the trade of this "kingdom, and ſo unwillingly promote the "linen trade, which would benefit both "them and us.

The

§ 30th June 1698.

"The conſequence whereof will neceſſitate "your parliament of England to interpoſe, to "prevent the miſchief that *threatens* us, un- "leſs your majeſty, by your authority and "great wiſdom, ſhall find means to ſecure "the trade of England by making your ſub- "jects of Ireland to purſue the joint inte- "reſt of both kingdoms."

"And we do moſt humbly implore your "majeſty's protection and favour in this "matter; and that you will make it your "royal care, and enjoin all thoſe you em- "ploy in Ireland, to make it their care, and "uſe their utmoſt diligence, to hinder the "*exportation of wool* from Ireland, except to "be imported hither, and for the diſcourag- "ing the woollen manufactures, and encou- "raging the linen manufactures in Ireland, "to which we ſhall be *always* ready to give "our *utmoſt* aſſiſtance."

This addreſs was preſented to his majeſty by the houſe. The anſwer is explicit, "I "ſhall do all that in me lies to diſcourage

" the woollen trade in Ireland, and encou-
" rage the linen manufacture there; and
" to promote the trade of England."

He ſoon after wrote a letter § to lord Galway, then one of the lords juſtices of this kingdom, in which he tells him, "that it " was never of ſuch importance to have at " preſent a good ſeſſion of parliament, not " only in regard to my affairs of that king- " dom, but eſpecially of this here. The chief " thing that muſt be tried to be prevented is, " that the Iriſh parliament takes no notice of " what has paſſed in this here †, and that you " make effectual laws for the linen manufac- " ture, and diſcourage *as far as poſſible* the " woollen." It would be unjuſt to infer from any of thoſe proceedings that this great prince wanted affection for this country. They were times of party. He was often under the neceſſity of complying againſt his own opinion and wiſhes, and about this time was obliged to ſend away his favourite

§ 16th July 1698. † Rapin's Hiſt. v. 17, p. 417.

favourite guards, in compliance with the deſire of the commons.

The houſes of parliament in England originally intended, that the buſineſs ſhould be done in the parliament of Ireland by the exertion of that great and juſt influence which king William had acquired in that kingdom. On the firſt day of the following ſeſſion § the lords juſtices, in their ſpeech, mention a bill tranſmitted for the encouragement of the linen and hempen manufactures, which they recommend in the following words, "the ſettlement of this "manufacture will contribute much to peo-"ple the country, and will be found *much* "*more advantageous to this kingd m* than the "woollen manufacture, which being the "ſettled ſtaple trade of England, *from* "*whence all foreign markets* are ſupplied, can "never be encouraged *here* for that purpoſe; "whereas the linen and hempen manufac-"tures will not only be encouraged, as con-

§ 27th September 1698, vol. 2. p. 994.

" ſiſtent with the trade of England, but will " render the trade of this kingdom both uſe- " ful and neceſſary to England."

The commons in their addreſs § promiſe their hearty endeavours to eſtabliſh a linen and hempen manufacture in Ireland, and ſay that they hoped to find ſuch a temperament in reſpect to the woollen trade here, that the ſame may not be injurious to England. They referred the conſideration of that ſubject to the committee of ſupply, who reſolved that an additional duty be laid on old and new drapery of the manufacture of this kingdom † that ſhall be exported, frizes excepted; to which the houſe agreed *. But there were petitions preſented againſt this duty, and relative to the quantity of it, and the committee appointed to conſider of this duty were not it ſeems ſo expeditious in their proceedings as the impatience of the times required ‡.

On

§ Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 997. † Ib. 2 vol. p. 1022.

* October 24, 1698.

‡ Com. Jour. v. 2, p. 1007, 1035.

On the 2d of October the lords juſtices made a quickening ſpeech to both houſes, taking notice, that the progreſs which they expected was not made, in the buſineſs of the ſeſſion, and uſe thoſe remarkable words, "The matters we recommended to you are ſo "neceſſary, and the proſperity of this king-"dom depends ſo much on the good ſucceſs "of this ſeſſion, that ſince we know his "majeſty's affairs cannot permit your ſitting "very long, we thought the greateſt mark "we could give of our kindneſs and con-"cern for you, was to come hither, and "deſire you to haſten the diſpatch of the "matters under your conſideration; in "which we are the more earneſt, becauſe "we muſt be ſenſible, that if the preſent "opportunity his majeſty's affection to you "hath put into your hands be loſt, it ſeems "hardly to be recovered ‡."

On the 2d of January 1698, O. S. the houſe reſolved, that the report from the committee of the whole houſe, appointed to conſider

‡ Com. Jour. p. 1032.

conſider of a duty to be laid on the woollen manufactures of this kingdom, ſhould be made on the next day, and nothing to intervene. But on that day a meſſage was delivered from the lords juſtices in the following words, " We have received his ma-" jeſtys commands† to ſend unto you a bill, " entitled an act for laying an additional " duty upon woollen manufactures exported " out of this kingdom; the paſſing of which " in this ſeſſion his majeſty recommends to " you, as what may be of great advantage " for the preſervation of the trade of this " kingdom."

The bill which accompanied this meſſage was preſented, and a queſtion for receiving it was carried in the affirmative, by 74 againſt 34. This bill muſt have been tranſmited from the council of Ireland. Whilſt the commons were proceeding with the utmoſt temper and moderation, were exerting great firmneſs in reſtraining all attempts to enflame the

† Com. Jour. 2 Vol. p. 1082.

the minds of the people†, and were deliberating on the moſt important ſubject that could ariſe, it was taken out of their hands‡; but the bill paſſed though not without oppoſition*, and received the royal aſſent on the 29th day of January 1698.

By this act an additional duty was impoſed of 4s. for every 20s. in value of broad cloth exported out of Ireland, and 2s. on every 20s. in value of new drapery, frizes only excepted, from the 25th of March 99, to the 25th March, 1702‖; the only woollen manufacture excepted was one of which Ireland had been in poſſeſſion before the reign of Edward the 3d, and in which ſhe had been always diſtinguiſhed‡. This law has every appearance of having being framed on the part of adminiſtration.

But

† Com. Jour. 2 vol. 1007. * Com. Jour. 1104, by 105, againſt 41. ‖ 10 W. 3 ch. 5.

‡ And. on Com. Vol. 1. 204.

§ The commiſſioners of trade in England by their repreſentation of the 11th October 1698, ſay, (Eng. Com. Jour. 12 vol. 437.) "they conceive it not neceſſary to make any alteration whatſoever in this act," but take notice that the duties on broad cloth, of which very little is made in Ireland, is 20 per cent; but the duty on new drapery, of which much is made, is but 10 per cent.

but it did not ſatisfy the Engliſh parliament, where a perpetual law was made, prohibiting, from the 20th of June, 1699*, the exportation from Ireland of all goods made or mixed with wool, except to England and Wales, and with the licenſe of the commiſſioners of the revenue; duties† had been before laid on the importation into England equal to a prohibition, therefore this act has operated as a total prohibition of the exportation.

Before theſe laws the Iriſh were under great diſadvantages in the woollen trade, by not being allowed to export their woollen manufactures to the Engliſh colonies§, or to import dye ſtuffs directly from thence; and the Engliſh in this reſpect, and in having thoſe excluſive markets, poſſeſſed conſiderable advantages.

Let it now be conſidered what are the uſual means taken to promote the proſperity

* Eng. Stat. 10 and 11 Wil. III. ch. 10, paſſed in 1699. † 12 Ch. II. ch. 4, Eng. and afterwards continued by 11 Geo. I. ch. 7. Brit.

§ By an Eng. act, made in 1663, the ſame which laid the firſt reſtraint on the exportation of cattle.

rity of any country in reſpect of trade and manufactures. She is encouraged to work up her own materials, to export her manufactures to other nations, to import from them the materials for manufacture, and to export none of her own that ſhe is able to work up, not to buy what ſhe is capable of ſelling to others, and to promote the carrying trade and ſhip-building. If theſe are the moſt obvious means by which a nation may advance in ſtrength and riches, inſtitutions counteracting thoſe means muſt neceſſarily tend to reduce it to weakneſs and poverty; and therefore the advocates for the continuance of thoſe inſtitutions will find it difficult to ſatisfy the world that ſuch a ſyſtem of policy is either reaſonable or juſt.

The cheapneſs of labour, the excellence of materials, and the ſucceſs of the manufacture in the excluded country *, may appear to an unprejudiced man to be rather reaſons

* See the Addreſs of the Engliſh Houſe of Lords.

ſons for the encouragement than for the prohibition. But the preamble of the Engliſh act of the 10th and 11th of William III. affirms, that the exportation from Ireland and the Engliſh plantations in America to foreign markets, heretofore ſupplied from England, would inevitably ſink the value of lands, and tend to the ruin of the trade and manufactures of that realm. I ſhall only conſider this aſſertion as relative to Ireland. A fact upon which the happineſs of a great and ancient kingdom, and of millions of people depends, ought to have been ſupported by the moſt inconteſtible evidence, and ſhould never be ſuffered to reſt in ſpeculation, or to be taken from the mere ſuggeſtion or diſtant apprehenſion of commercial jealouſy. Thoſe fears for the future were not founded on any experience of the paſt. From what market had the woollen manufactures of Ireland ever excluded England? What part of her trade, and which of her manufactures had been ruined, and where did any of her lands fall by the woollen exports of Ireland? Were any

any of thoſe facts attempted to be proved at the time of the prohibition? The amount of the Iriſh export proves it to have been impoſſible that thoſe facts could have then exiſted. The conſequences mentioned as likely to ariſe to England from the ſuppoſed increaſe of thoſe manufactures in Ireland, had no other foundation but the apprehenſions of rivalſhip among trading people, who, in excluding their fellow-citizens, have opened the gates for the admiſſion of the enemy.

Whether thoſe apprehenſions are now well founded, ſhould be carefully conſidered. Juſtice, ſound policy, and the general good of the Britiſh empire require it. The arguments in ſupport of thoſe reſtraints are principally theſe:—That labour is cheaper and taxes lower in Ireland than in England, and that the former would be able to under ſell the latter in all foreign markets.

Spinning is now certainly cheaper in Ireland, becauſe the perſons employed in it live

live on food* with which the Engliſh would not be content; but the wages of ſpinners would ſoon riſe if the trade was opened. At the loom, I am informed, that the ſame quantity of work is done cheaper in England than in Ireland; and we have the misfortune of daily experience to convince us that the Engliſh, notwithſtanding the ſuppoſed advantages of the Iriſh in this trade, underſell them at their own markets in every branch of the woollen manufacture. A deciſive proof that they cannot underſell the Engliſh in foreign markets.

With the increaſe of manufactures, agriculture and commerce in Ireland, the demand for labour, and conſequently its price, would increaſe §. That price would be ſoon higher in Ireland than in England. It is not in the richeſt countries, but in thoſe that are growing rich the faſteſt, that the wages of labour are higheſt †, though the price of

* Potatoes and milk, or more frequently water.

§ Dr. Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 vol. p. 94.

† Ib. 85, 86.

of proviſions is much lower in the latter; this, before the preſent rebellion, was in both reſpects the caſe of England and North America. Any difference in the price of labour is more than balanced by the difference in the price of the material, which has been for many years paſt higher in Ireland than in England, and would become more valuable if the export of the mannfacture was allowed. The Engliſh have alſo great advantages in this trade from their habits of diligence, ſuperior ſkill and large capitals. From theſe circumſtances, though the Scotch have full liberty to export their woollen manufactures, the Engliſh work up their wool*, and the Scotch make only ſome kinds of coarſe cloaths for the lower claſſes of their people; and this is ſaid to be for want of a capital to manufacture it at home §. If the woollen trade was now open to Ireland, it would be for the moſt part

* Dr. Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. p. 445. Dr. Campbell's Polit. Survey of Great Britain, 2 Vol. p. 159. Anderſon on Induſtry.

§ Smith, ib.

part carried on by Engliſh capitals, and by merchants reſident there. Nearly one half of the ſtock which carried on the foreign trade of Ireland in 1672, inconſiderable as it then was, belonged to thoſe who lived out of Ireland *. The greater part of the exportation and coaſting trade of Britiſh America was carried on by the capitals of merchants who reſided in Great Britain; even many of the ſtores and ware-houſes from which goods were retailed in ſome of their principal provinces, particularly in Virginia and Maryland, belonged to merchants who reſided in Great Britain, and the retail trade was carried on by thoſe who were not reſident in the country †. It is ſaid that in ancient Egypt, China and Indoſtan, the greater part of their exportation trade was carried on by foreigners §. The ſame thing happened formerly in Ireland, where the whole commerce of the country was carried on by the Dutch ‡; and at preſent in the victualling

* Sir Wil. Petty's Polit. Survey of Ireland, p. 90.
† Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. p. 446. § Ib.
‡ Lord Strafford's Letters, 1 Vol. p. 33.

victualling trade of Ireland, the Iriſh are but factors to the Engliſh. This is not without example in Great Britain, where there are many little manufacturing towns, the inhabitants of which have not capitals ſufficient to tranſport the produce of their own induſtry to thoſe diſtant markets where there is demand and conſumption for it, and their merchants are properly only the agents of wealthier merchants, who reſide in ſome of the greater commercial cities †. The Iriſh are deficient in all kinds of ſtock, they have not ſufficient for the cultivation of their lands, and are deficient in the ſtocks of maſter manufacturers, wholeſale merchants, and even of retailers.

Of what Ireland gains it is computed that one third centers in Great Britain §. Of our woollen manufacture the greateſt part of the profit would go directly there. But the manufacturers of Ireland would be employed, would

† Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. p. 445.

§ Sir M. Decker's decline of foreign trade, p. 155, and Anderſon on Commerce, 2 Vol. p. 149.

would be enabled to buy from the farmers the ſuperfluous produce of their labour, the people would become induſtrious, their numbers would greatly increaſe, the Britiſh ſtate would be ſtrengthened, though probably this country would not for many years find any great influx of wealth; it would be however more equally diſtributed, from which the people and the government would derive many important advantages.

Whatever wealth might be gained by Ireland would be, in every reſpect, an acceſſion to Great Britain. Not only a conſiderable part of it would flow to the ſeat of government, and of final judicature, and to the centre of commerce; but when Ireland ſhould be able ſhe would be found willing, as in juſtice ſhe ought to be, to bear her part of thoſe expences which Great Britain may hereafter incur, in her efforts for the protection of the whole Britiſh empire. If Ireland chearfully and ſpontaneouſly, but when ſhe was ill able, contributed, particularly in the years 1759, 1761 and 1769, and continued

to

to do ſo in the midſt of diſtreſs and poverty, without murmur, to the end of the year 1778, when Great Britain thought proper to relieve her from a burden which ſhe was no longer able to bear, no doubt can be entertained of her contributing, in a much greater proportion, when the means of acquiring ſhall be opened to her.

I form this opinion, not only from the proofs which the experience of many years, and in many ſignal inſtances has given, but the nature of the Iriſh conſtitution, which requires that the laws of Ireland ſhould be certified under the great ſeal of England, and the ſuperintending protection of Great Britain, neceſſary to the exiſtence of Ireland, would make it her intereſt to cultivate, at all times, a good underſtanding with her ſiſter kingdom.

The lowneſs of taxes in Ireland ſeems to fall within the objection ariſing from the cheapneſs of labour. But the diſproportion between the taxes of the two kingdoms is much overrated in Great Britain. Hearth-money

in Ireland amounts to about 59,000l. yearly, the ſums raiſed by Grand Juries are ſaid to exceed the annual ſum of 140,000l. and the duties on beef, butter, pork and tallow exported, at a medium from 1772 to 1778, amount to 26,577l. 11s. yearly. Theſe are payable out of lands, or their immediate produce, and may well be conſidered as a land tax. Theſe with the many other taxes payable in Ireland, compared either with the annual amount of the ſums which the inhabitants can earn or expend, with the rentall of the lands, the amount of the circulating ſpecie, of perſonal property, or of the trade of Ireland, it is apprehended would appear not to be inferior in proportion to the taxes of England, compared with any of thoſe objects in that country†. The ſums remitted to abſentees*, are worſe than ſo much

† Compare the circumſtances of the two countries in one of thoſe articles, which affects all the reſt. The ſums raiſed in Great Britain in time of peace are ſaid to amount to ten millions, in Ireland to more than one million yearly. The circulating caſh of the former is eſtimated at 23 millions, of the latter at two.

See poſt. 59.

much paid in taxes, becauſe a large proportion of theſe is uſually expended in the country. If this reaſoning is admitted, it will require no calculation to ſhew that Ireland pays more taxes in proportion to its ſmall income, than England does in proportion to its great one.

Of exciſable commodities, the conſumption by each manufacturer is not ſo conſiderable as to make the great difference commonly imagined in the price of labour. It is an acknowledged fact that Ireland pays in exciſes as much as ſhe is able to bear, and that her inability to bear more ariſes from thoſe very reſtraints. But ſuppoſing the diſproportion to be as great as is erroneouſly imagined in Great Britain, it will not conclude in favour of the prohibition. The land-tax is nearly four times as high in ſome counties of England as in others, and proviſions are much cheaper in ſome parts of that kingdom than in others, and yet they have all ſufficient employment, and go to market upon equal terms. But a

monopoly and not an equal market was plainly the object in 1698; it was not to prevent the Iriſh from underſelling at foreign markets, but to prevent their ſelling there at all. The conſequences to the excluded country have been mentioned. England has alſo been a great ſufferer by this miſtaken policy.

Mr. Dobbs, who wrote in 1729*, affirms that by this law of 1699, our woollen manufacturers were forced away into France, Germany and Spain; that they had in many branches ſo much improved the woollen manufacture of France, as not only to ſupply themſelves, but to vie with the Engliſh in foreign markets, and that by their correſpondence, they had laid the foundation for the running of wool thither both from England and Ireland. He ſays that thoſe nations were then ſo improved, as in a great meaſure to ſupply themſelves with many ſorts they formerly had from England, and ſince that time have deprived Britain

* Eſſay on the Trade of Ireland, p. 6, 7.

Britain of millions, inſtead of the thouſands that Ireland might have made.

It is now acknowledged that the French underſell the Engliſh; and as far as they are ſupplied with Iriſh wool, the loſs to the Britiſh empire is double what it would be, if the Iriſh exported their goods manufactured. This is mentioned by Sir Matthew Decker*, as the cauſe of the decline of the Engliſh, and the increaſe of the French woollen manufactures; and he aſſerts that the Iriſh can recover that trade out of their hands. England, ſince the paſſing this law, has got much leſs of our wool than before †. In 1698, the export of our wool to England amounted to 377,520¾ ſtone; at a medium of eight years, to lady-day 1728, it was only 227,049 ſtone, which is 148,000 ſtone leſs than in 1698, and was a loſs of more than half a million yearly to England. In the laſt ten years the quantity exported has been ſo greatly reduced, that in one of theſe years ‡ it amounted

* Decline of foreign trade, p. 55, 56, 155.
† Dobbs, p. 76. ‡ In 1774.

mounted only to 1007ſt. 11lb. and in the laſt year did not exceed 1665 ſt. 12lb. *. The price of wool, under an abſolute prohibition, is 50l. or 60l. per cent. under the market price of Europe, which will always defeat the prohibition †.

The impracticability of preventing the pernicious practice of running wool is now well underſtood. Of the thirty-two counties in Ireland nineteen are maritime, and the reſt are waſhed by a number of fine rivers that empty themſelves into the ſea. Can ſuch an extent of ocean, ſuch a range of coaſts, ſuch a multitude of harbours, bays and creeks be effectually guarded?

The prohibition of the export of live cattle forced the Iriſh into the re-eſtabliſhment

* Nor was this deficiency made up by the exportation of yarn. The quantities of theſe ſeveral articles exported from 1764 to 1778, are mentioned in the Appendix, Numb.

† Smith's Memoirs of Wool, 2 Vol. p. 554. The only way to prevent it, is to enable us to work it up at home. Ib. 293.

ment of their woollen manufacture; and the reſtraint of the woollen manufacture was a ſtrong temptation to the running of wool. The ſevereſt penalties were enacted, the Britiſh legiſlature, the government and houſe of commons of Ireland, exerted all poſſible efforts to remove this growing evil, but in vain, until the law was made in Great Britain * in 1739, to take off the duties from woollen or bay yarn exported from Ireland, excepting worſted yarn of two or more threads, which has certainly given a conſiderable check to the running of wool, and has ſhewn that the policy of opening is far more efficacious than that of reſtraining. The world is become a great commercial ſociety, exclude trade from one channel, and it ſeldom fails to find another.

To ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of Great Britain's opening to Ireland ſome new means of acquiring, let the annual balance of exports and

* This was done for the benefit of the woollen manufacture in England. Eng. Com. Jour. 22 Vol. p. 442.

and imports, returned from the entries in the different cuſtom houſes, in favour of Ireland, on all her trade with the whole world, in every year from 1768 to 1778, be compared with the remittances made from Ireland to England in each of thoſe years, it will evidently appear that thoſe remittances could not be made out of that balance. The entries of exports made at cuſtom houſes are well known to exceed the real amount of thoſe exports in all countries, and this exceſs is greater in times of diffidence, when merchants wiſh to acquire credit by giving themſelves the appearance of being great traders.

This balance in favour of Ireland on her general trade, appears by thoſe returns to have been in 1776, 606,190l. 11s. 0¼d. in 1777, 24,203l. 3s. 10¼d. in 1778, 386,384l. 5s. 7d. and taken at a medium of eleven years from 1768 to 1778, both incluſive, it amounts to the ſum of 605,083l. 7s. 5d. The ſums remitted from Ireland to Great-Britain for rents, intereſt of

of money, penſions, ſalaries and profits of offices amounted, at the loweſt computation, from 1768 to 1773, to 1,100,000l. yearly *; and from 1773, when the tontines were introduced, from which period large ſums were borrowed from England, thoſe remittances were conſiderably increaſed, and are now not leſs than between 12 and 1300ol. yearly. Ireland then pays to Great-Britain double the ſum that ſhe collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great-Britain allows her. It will be difficult to find a ſimilar inſtance in the hiſtory of mankind.

Thoſe great and conſtant iſſues of her wealth without any return, not felt by any other country in ſuch a degree, are reaſons for granting advantages to Ireland to ſupply this conſuming waſte, inſtead of depriving her of any which Nature has beſtowed.

* This is ſtated conſiderably under the computation made in the liſt of abſentees publiſhed in Dublin in 1769, which makes the amount at that time 1,208,982l. 14s. 6d.

If any of the reſources, which have hitherto enabled her to bear this prodigious drain, are injurious to the manufactures both of England and Ireland, and highly advantageous to the rivals and enemies of both, is it wiſe in Great-Britain by perſevering in an impracticable ſyſtem of commercial policy, repugnant to the natural courſe and order of things, to ſuffer ſo very conſiderable a part of the empire to remain in ſuch a ſituation?

The experiment of an equal and reaſonable ſyſtem of commerce is worth making; that which has been found the beſt conductor in philoſophy is the ſureſt guide in commerce.

Would you conſult perſons employed in the trade? They have in one reſpect an intereſt oppoſite to that of the public. To narrow the competition is advantageous to the dealers*, but prejudicial to the public. If Edward the firſt had not preferred the general

* Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1 Vol. 316.

general welfare of his ſubjects to the intereſted opinions and petitions of the traders, all merchant traders (who were then moſtly ſtrangers) would have been ſent away from London †, for which purpoſe the commons offered him the 50th part of their moveables *.

What was the information given by the trading towns in 1697 and 1698, on the ſubject of the woollen manufacture of Ireland, ſeveral of their § petitions ſtate that the woollen manufacture was *ſet up* in Ireland, as if it had been lately introduced there; and one of them goes ſo far as to repreſent the particular time and manner of introducing it. "Many of the poor of "that kingdom, ſays this extraordinary "petition, during the late rebellion there, "fled into the Weſt of England, where "they were put to work in the woolen manu-

† Anderſon on Com. 1 Vol. 131.

* The wiſh of traders for a monopoly is not confined to England; in the ſame kingdom ſome parts are reſtrained in favour of others, as in Sweden to this hour. Abbe Reſnal. 2 Vol. 28.

§ Eng. Com. Journ. 12 Vol. 64, 68.

‡ Eng. Com. Jonrn. 12 Vol. 64.

" manufacture to learn that trade, and ſince " the reduction of Ireland *endeavours were* " *uſed* to *ſet up* thoſe manufactures there."

Would any man ſuppoſe that this could relate to a manufacture, in which this kingdom excelled before the time of Edward the 3d, which had been the ſubject of ſo many laws in both kingdoms, and which was always cultivated here, and before this rebellion with more ſucceſs than after it? the trading towns gave accounts totally inconſiſtent of the ſtate of this manufacture at that time in England: from Exeter it is repreſented as greatly decayed and diſcouraged* in thoſe parts, and diminiſhed in England. But a petition from Leeds repreſents this manufacture as having very much increaſed† ſince the revolution in all its ſeveral branches, to the general intereſt of England; and yet, in two days after the clothiers from three towns in Glouceſterſhire aſſert, that the trade has decayed, and that the poor are almoſt ſtarved‡. The commiſſioners of trade differ in opinion from them, and by their

* Engliſh Com. Journ. vol. 12, p. 7.
† Ib. 527. ‡ Ib. 530.

their report, it appears that the woollen manufacture was then very much increaſed and improved †. The traders have ſometimes miſtaken their own intereſts on thoſe ſubjects; in 1698, a petition for prohibiting the importation from Ireland of all worſted and and woollen yarn, repreſents that the poor of England are ready to periſh by this importation *; and in 1739, ſeveral petitions were preferred againſt taking off the duties § from worſted and bay yarn exported from Ireland to England. But this has been done in the manner before-mentioned, and is now acknowledged to be highly uſeful to England. Trading people have ever aimed at excluſive privileges; of this there are two extraordinary inſtances; in the year 1698, two petitions were preferred, from Folkſtone and Aldborough, ſtating a ſingular grievance that they ſuffered from Ireland, "by the Iriſh catching herrings *at Waterford* "*and Wexford* ‡ and ſending them to the "Streights, and thereby *foreſtalling* and ruin-"ing petitioners markets;" but theſe petitioners

† Engliſh Com. Jour. Vol. 12, p. 434.

* Ib. 387. § Ib. vol. 22. ‡ Ib. 178.

oners had the *hard lot* of having motions in their favour rejected.

I wiſh that the fulleſt information may be had in this important inveſtigation, but between the inconſiſtent accounts and opinions that will probably be given, experience only can decide; and experience will demonſtrate that the removal of thoſe reſtraints will promote the proſperity of both kingdoms.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

THE

COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS

OF

IRELAND

CONSIDERED.

SIXTH LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

SIXTH LETTER.

My Lord,

Dublin, 1ſt September 1779.

BY the proceedings in the Engliſh parliament in the year 1698, and the ſpeech of the lords juſtices to the Iriſh parliament in that year it appears, that the linen was intended to be given to this country as an equivalent for the woollen manufacture. The opinion that this ſuppoſed equivalent was accepted of as ſuch by Ireland is miſtaken. The temperament, which the commons of Ireland in their addreſs ſaid they hoped to find, was no more than a partial and a temporary duty on the

exportation, as an experiment only, and not as an eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, reſerving the exportation of frize, then much the moſt valuable part to Ireland ‖. The Engliſh intended the linen manufacture as a compenſation, and declared they thought it would be much more advantageous to Ireland * than the woollen trade.

This idea of an equivalent has led ſeveral perſons, and among the reſt two very able writers †, into miſtakes, from the want of information in ſome facts which are neceſſary to be known, that this tranſaction may be fully underſtood, and therefore ought to be particularly ſtated.

The

‖ The lords commiſſioners of trade in England, by their report of the 31ſt Auguſt 1697, (Eng. Com. Jour. 12 vol. p. 428.) relating to the trade between England and Ireland, though they recommend the reſtraining of the exportation of all ſorts of woollen manufactures out of Ireland, make the following exception, "except only, that of their "frize, as is wont, to England."

* See before Speech of lords Juſtices.

† Mr. Dobbs, and after him Dr. Smith.

The Iriſh had before this period applied themſelves to the linen trade. This appears by two of their ſtatutes, in the reign of Elizabeth, one laying a duty on the export of flax and linen yarn ‡, and the other, making it felony to ſhip them without paying ſuch duty §. In the reign of Charles the 1ſt, great pains were taken by lord Strafford to encourage this manufacture; and in the ſucceeding reign † the great and munificent efforts of the firſt duke of Ormond were crowned with merited ſucceſs. The blaſts of civil diſſentions nipped thoſe opening buds of induſtry, and when the ſeaſon was more favourable, it is probable that, like England, they found the woollen manufacture a more uſeful object of national purſuit; which may be collected from the addreſs of the Engliſh houſe of commons, "that they ſo unwillingly promote the linen "trade *;" and it was natural for a poor and

‡ 11 Elizabeth, ſeſſion 3, ch. 10. § 13 Elizabeth, ſeſſion 5, ch. 4. † 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 9, for the advancement of the linen manufacture. Carte.

* See before.

exhauſted country to work up the materials of which it was poſſeſſed.

In 1696 the Engliſh had given encouragement to the manufactures of hemp and flax in Ireland, but without ſtipulating any reſtraint of the export of woollen goods. The Engliſh act made in that year recites that great ſums of money were yearly exported out of England, for the purchaſing of hemp, flax and linen, and the productions thereof, which might be prevented by being ſupplied from Ireland, and allows natives of England and Ireland to import into England free of all duties §, hemp and flax, and all the productions thereof. In the ſame ſeſſion ‡ a law paſſed in England for the more effectually preventing the exportation of wool, and for encouraging the importation thereof from Ireland. Both thoſe manufactures were under the conſideration of parliament this ſeſſion, and it was thought, from enlarged views of the welfare of both kingdoms, that England ſhould

§ 7 and 8 W. 3, ch. 39 from the 1ſt of Auguſt 1696.

‡ 7 and 8 W. ch. 28.

ſhould encourage the linen, without diſcouraging the woollen manufacture of Ireland. There was no further encouragement given by England to our linen manufacture for ſome years after the year 1696*. *In* 1699, *there was no equivalent whatever given* for the prohibition of the export of our woollen manufactures.

It is true, the aſſurances given by both houſes of parliament in England, for the encouragement of our linen trade, were as ſtrong as words could expreſs; but was this intended encouragement, if immediately carried into execution, an equivalent to Ireland for what ſhe had loſt? let it firſt be conſidered whether it was an equivalent at the time of the prohibition.

The woollen was then the principal manufacture and trade of Ireland. That it was then conſidered as her ſtaple, appears from the ſeveral acts of parliament beforementioned

* Not till the year 1705.

mentioned, and from the attempt made in 1695, by the Iriſh houſe of commons, to lay a duty on all old and new drapery imported. The amount of the export proves § the value of the trade to ſo poor a country as Ireland, and makes it probable that ſhe then clothed her own people. The addreſs of the Engliſh houſe of lords ſhews that this manufacture was "growing" amongſt us, and the goodneſs of our materials "for making *all manner* of cloth ‡." And the Engliſh act of 1698 is a voucher that this manufacture was then in ſo flouriſhing a ſtate as to give apprehenſions, however ill-founded, of its rivalling England in foreign markets. The immediate conſequences to Ireland ſhewed the value of what ſhe loſt; many thouſand manufacturers were obliged to leave this kingdom for want of employment; many parts of the ſouthern and weſtern counties were ſo far depopulated that they have not yet recovered a reaſonable number of inhabitants; and the whole kingdom was reduced

§ Com. Jour. 2 Vol. 725, 733. 16. vol. 360.

‡ See before.

duced to the greateſt poverty and diſtreſs *. The linen trade of Ireland was then of little conſideration, compared with the woollen †. The whole exportation of linens in 1700 ‡ amounted only in value to 14,112l. It was an experiment ſubſtituted in the place of an eſtabliſhed trade.

The Engliſh ports in Aſia, Africa and America were then ſhut againſt our linens, and when they were opened § for our white and brown linens, the reſtraints of imports from thence to Ireland made that conceſſion of leſs value, and ſhe ſtill found it her intereſt to ſend for the moſt part her linens to England. The linen could not have been a compenſation for the woollen manufacture which employs by far a greater number of hands, and yields much greater profit to the public, as well as to the manufacturers ‖. Of this manufacture there are not many countries which have the primum in equal perfection

* Dobbs 6, 7. Com. Journ. 16 Vol. 362.

‡ Ib. 363.

§ By 3d and 4th Anne, ch. 9.

‖ And. on Comm. 2 Vol. 225.

perfection with England and Ireland, and no countries, taking in the various kinds of thoſe extenſive manufactures, ſo fit for carrying them on. There cannot be many rivals in this trade; in the linen they are moſt numerous. Other parts of the world are more fit for it than Ireland, and many equally ſo.

If this could be ſuppoſed to have been an equivalent at the time, or to have become ſo by its ſucceſs, it can no longer be conſidered in that light. The commercial ſtate of Europe is greatly altered. Ireland can no longer enjoy the benefit intended for her. It was intended that the great ſums of money remitted out of England to foreign countries in this branch of commerce ſhould all center in Ireland, and that England ſhould be ſupplied with linen from thence*; but foreigners now draw great ſums from England in this trade, and rival the

* This appears by the preamble to the Engliſh act of the 7th and 8th W. III. c. 39.

the Iriſh in the Engliſh markets. The Ruſſians are become powerful rivals to the Iriſh and underſel them in the coarſe kinds of linen. This is now the ſtaple manufacture of Scotland. England that had formerly cultivated this manufacture without ſucceſs, and had taken linens * from France to the amount of 700,000l. yearly, has now made great progreſs in it. The encouragement of this trade in England and Scotland has been long a principal object to the Britiſh legiſlature, and the nation that encouraged us to the undertaking is now become our rival in it †; that this is not too ſtrong an expreſſion will appear by conſidering two Britiſh ſtatutes, one of which ‡ has laid a duty on the importation of Iriſh ſail-cloth into Great-Britain, as long as the bounties ſhould be paid on the exportation from § Ireland, which obliged us to diſcontinue

* Anderſon on Commerce, 2 Vol. 177.

† Com. Journ. 16 Vol. 365.

‡ In 1750.

§ By the law of 1750, and the bounties given on the exportation

diſcontinue them; and the other* has given a bounty on the exportation of *Britiſh* checquered and ſtripen linens exported out of *Great-Britain* to Africa, America, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, the iſland of Minorca, or the Eaſt-Indies. This is now become a very valuable part of the manufacture, which Great-Britain by the operation of this bounty keeps to herſelf. The bounties on the exportation of all other linen, which ſhe has generouſly given to ours as well as to her own † operate much more ſtrongly in favour of the latter‡; the expence of freight, inſurance, commiſſion, &c. in ſending

exportation of ſail-cloth from Great-Britain to foreign countries, Ireland has almoſt loſt this trade; ſhe cannot now ſupply herſelf. Great-Britain has not been the gainer; the quantities of ſail-cloth imported there in 1774, exceeding, according to the return from the cuſtom-houſe in London, the quantities imported in the year 1750, when the reſtrictive law was made. It has been taken from Ireland, and given to the Ruſſians, Germans, and Dutch. Ir. Com. Journ 16 Vol. 363.

* 10 G. III. ch. continued by act of laſt ſeſſion to the year 1786.

† In the year 1743.

‡ Com. Journ. 16 Vol. 369, 389.

ſending the linens from Ireland to England has been computed at four per cent. and, if this computation is right, when the Britiſh linens obtain 12l. per cent. the full amount of the premium, the Iriſh do not receive above eight. Thoſe bounties, though acknowledged to be a favour to Ireland, give Great-Britain a further, and a very important advantage in this trade, by inducing us to ſend all our linens to England, from whence other countries are ſupplied.

The great hinge upon which the ſtipulation on the part of England in the year 1698 turned, was that England ſhould give every poſſible encouragement to the linen and hempen manufactures in Ireland. Encouraging theſe manufactures in another country was not compatible with this intention. The courſe of events made it neceſſary to do this in Scotland *; the courſe of trade

* *To pleaſe the Engliſh* Scotland has for half a century paſt exerted herſelf, as much as poſſible, to improve the linen manufacture. Anderſon on Induſtry, 2 Vol. 233.

trade made it neceſſary for England to do the ſame; a commercial country muſt cultivate every conſiderable manufacture of which ſhe has or can get the primum. Theſe circumſtances have totally changed the ſtate of the queſtion; and if it was reaſonable and juſt that Ireland in 1698 ſhould have accepted of the linen in the place of the woollen manufactures, it deſerves to be conſidered, whether by the almoſt total change of the circumſtances it is not now unreaſonable and unjuſt.

America itſelf, the opening of whoſe markets‡ to Iriſh linens was thought to have been one of the principal encouragements to that trade, is now become a rival and an enemy, and when ſhe puts off the latter character will appear in the former with new force and infinite advantages.

The emigrations for many years of ſuch great multitudes of our linen manufacturers to

‡ Com. Journ. 16 vol. p. 370.

to America* proves incontrovertibly that they can carry on their trade with more ſucceſs in America than in Ireland. But let us examine the facts to determine whether the propoſed encouragements have taken place. The declaration of the lords of England for the encouragement of the linen manufacture of Ireland was, "to all the "advantage and profit that kingdom can be "capable of," and of the commons, "that "they ſhall be *always* ready to give it their "*utmoſt* aſſiſtance." The ſpeech of the lords juſtices ſhews the extent of this engagement, and promiſes the encouragement of England, "to the linen and hempen "manufactures of Ireland."

In the year 1705† liberty was given to the natives of England or Ireland, to export from Ireland to the Engliſh plantations white and brown linens only, but no liberty given

* The province of Ulſter in two years is ſaid to have loſt 30.000 of its inhabitants. Com. Journ. 16 v. 381.

† From 24th June 1705. 3 and 4 Ann ch. 8. for 11 years; but afterwards continued.

given to bring in return any goods from thence to Ireland, which will appear, from the account in the appendix, to have made this law of inconſiderable effect. In 1743 premiums were given on the exportation of Engliſh and Iriſh linens from Great Britain, and the bounty granted by Great Britain in 1774, on flax-ſeed imported into Ireland, is a further proof of the munificent attention of Great Britain to our linen trade. But checquered, ſtriped, printed, painted, ſtained or dyed linens were not until lately admitted into the plantations from Ireland; and the ſtatutes of queen Anne*, laying duties at the rate of 30 per cent on ſuch linens made in *foreign* parts and imported into Great Britain, have been, rather by a forced conſtruction, extended to Ireland, which is deprived of the Britiſh markets† for thoſe goods, and, until the year 1777‡, was excluded from the American markets alſo.

* Brit. acts, 10 Anne, ch. 19. 11 and 12 Anne, ch. 9. 6 G. 1, ch. 4.

† Brit. act, 18 G. 3, ch. 53.

‡ Ir. Com. Journ. 16 vol. 363, 364.

alſo. But it is thought as to checquered and ſtriped linens, which are a valuable branch of the linen trade, that this act will have little effect in favour of this country, from the operation of the before-mentioned Britiſh act of the 10th G. 3, which, by granting a bounty on the exportation of thoſe goods of the manufacture of Great Britain only, gives a direct preference to the Britiſh linen manufacture before the Iriſh.

The hempen manufacture of Ireland has been ſo far *diſcouraged* by Great Britain, that the Iriſh have totally abandoned the culture of hemp*.

I hope to be excuſed for weighing ſcrupulouſly a propoſed equivalent, for which the receiver was obliged to part with the advantages of which he was poſſeſſed. The equivalent, given in 1667 for the almoſt entire excluſion of Ireland from the ports of England and America, was the exportation of

* Ir. Com. Journ. 16 vol. 365.

of our manufactures to foreign nations. The prohibition of 1699 was not altogether conſiſtent with the equivalent of 1667; and from the equivalent of 1698 the ſuperior encouragement ſince given to Engliſh and Scotch linen, and the diſcouragement to the checquer and ſtamped linen and ſail cloth of Ireland muſt make a large deduction. But why muſt one manufacture only be encouraged? the linen and the woollen trades of Ireland were formerly both encouraged by the legiſlatures of both kingdoms; they are now both equally encouraged in England.

If this ſingle trade was found ſufficient employment for 1,000,000 men who remained in this country at the time of this reſtraint (the contrary of which has been ſhewn), it would require the interpoſition of more than human wiſdom to divide it among 2,500,000 men at this day, and to ſend the multitude away ſatisfied.

No populous commercial country can ſubſiſt on one manufacture; if the world has

has ever produced ſuch an inſtance, I have not been able to find it. Reaſon and experience demonſtrate that, to make a ſociety happy, the members of it muſt be able to ſupply the wants of each other, as far as their country affords the means, and where it does not, by exchanging the produce of their induſtry for that of their neighbours. Where the former is diſcouraged or the latter prevented, that community cannot be happy. If they are not allowed to ſend to other countries the manufactured produce of their own, the people who enjoy that liberty will underſell them in their own markets; the reſtrained manufacturers will be reduced to poverty, and will hang like paralytic limbs on the reſt of the body.

If England's commercial ſyſtem would have been incomplete, had ſhe failed to cultivate any one principal manufacture of which ſhe had or could obtain the material, what ſhall we ſay to the commercial ſtate of that country, reſtrained in a manufacture of which ſhe has the materials in

bundance, and in which ſhe had made great progreſs, and almoſt confined to one manufacture of which ſhe has not the primum.

Manufactures, though they may flouriſh for a time, generally fail in countries that do not produce the principal materials of them. Of this there are many inſtances. Venice and the other Italian ſtates carried on the woollen manufacture, until the countries which produced the materials manufactured them, when the Italian manufactures declined, and dwindled into little conſideration in compariſon of their former ſplendor. The Flemings, from their vicinity to thoſe countries that produced the materials, beat the Italians out of their markets. But when England cultivated that manufacture, the Flemings loſt it. That this and not oppreſſion was the cauſe appears from the flouriſhing ſtate of the linen manufacture* there, becauſe it conſumes flax the native

* Anderſon on Induſtry, 1 vol. 34 to 40.

native produce of the ſoil; and it is much to be feared that thoſe iſlands will be obliged to yield the ſuperiority in this trade to other nations that have great extent of country, and ſufficient land to ſpare for this impoveriſhing production.

That ſome parts of Ireland may produce good flax muſt be allowed, and alſo that parts of Flanders would produce fine wool. But though the legiſlature has for many years made it a capital object to encourage the growth of flax and the raiſing of flax-ſeed in this kingdom, yet it is obliged to pay above 9000l. yearly in premiums on the importation of flax-ſeed, which is now almoſt all imported, and coſts us between 70 and 80,000l. yearly. Flax-farming, in any large quantity, is become a precarious and loſing trade†, and thoſe who have been induced to attempt it by premiums from the linen-board have, after receiving thoſe pre-

† Com. Journ. 16 vol. 370.

miums, generally found themſelves loſers, and have declined that branch of tillage.

When the imported flax-ſeed is unſound and fails in particular diſtricts, which very frequently happens, the diſtreſs, confuſion and litigation that ariſe among manufacturers, farmers, retailers and merchants, affords a melancholy proof of the dangerous conſequences to a populous nation, when the induſtry of the people, and the hope of the riſing year reſt on a ſingle manufacture, for the materials of which we muſt depend upon the courteſy and good faith of other nations.

Let me appeal to the experience of very near a century, in the very inſtance now before you. A ſingle manufacture is highly encouraged; it obtains large premiums not only from the legiſlature of its own country, but from that of a great neighbouring kingdom; it becomes not only the firſt, but almoſt the ſole national object; immenſe ſums of money are expended in the cultivation

tion of it §, and the ſucceſs exceeds our moſt ſanguine expectations. But look into the ſtate of this country; you will find property circulating ſlowly and languidly, and in the moſt numerous claſſes of your people, no circulation or property at all. You will frequently find them in want of employment and of food, and reduced in a vaſt number of inſtances from the ſlighteſt cauſes to diſtreſs and beggary. All other manufacturers will continue ſpiritleſs, poor and diſtreſſed, and derive from uncertain employment a precarious and miſerable ſubſiſtence; they gain little by the ſucceſs of the proſperous trade, the dealers in which are tempted to buy from that country to which they principally ſell; the diſeaſe of thoſe morbid parts muſt ſpread through the whole body, and will at length reach the perſons employed in the favoured manufacture. Theſe will become poor and wretched and diſcontented; they emigrate by thouſands; in vain you repreſent the crime of deſerting

§ See Com. Jour. 17 vol. 263 to 287 for the ſums paid from 1700 to 1775. They amount to 803,486l 0s 2¾d

deſerting their country, the folly of forſaking their friends, the temerity of wandering to diſtant and perhaps inhoſpitable climates; their deſpondency is deaf to the ſuggeſtions of prudence, and will anſwer, that they can no longer ſtay "where hope never comes," but will fly from theſe "regions of ſorrow*."

Let me not be thought to undervalue the bounties and generoſity of that great nation which has taken our linen trade under its protection. There is much ill-breeding, though perhaps ſome good ſenſe, in the churliſh reply of the philoſopher to the requeſt of the prince who viſited his humble dwelling, and deſired to know, and to gratify his wiſhes; they were no more than this, that the prince ſhould not ſtand between the philoſopher and the ſun. Had he been a man of the world he might have expreſſed the ſame idea with more addreſs, though with leſs force and ſignificance; he

* This malady of emigration among our linen manufacturers has appeared at many different periods during this century.

he might have ſaid, "I am ſenſible of your "greatneſs and of your power; I have no "doubts of your liberality; but Nature has "abundantly given me all that I wiſh; in-"tercept not one of her greateſt gifts; "allow me to enjoy the bounties of her "hand, and the contentment of my own "mind will furniſh the reſt."

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

SEVENTH LETTER.

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My Lord,

Dublin, 3d Sept. 1779.

By comparing the reſtrictive law of 1699, with the ſtatutes which had been previouſly enacted in England from the 15th year of the reign of Charles the ſecond, relative to the Colonies, it appears that this reſtrictive law originated in a ſyſtem of colonization. The principle of that ſyſtem was that the Colonies ſhould ſend their materials to England and take from thence her manufactures, and that the making thoſe manufactures in the Colonies ſhould be prohibited

hibited or diſcouraged. But was it reaſonable to extend this principle to Ireland? the climate, growth and productions of the Colonies were different from thoſe of their parent country. England had no ſugar canes, coffee, dying ſtuff, and little tobacco. She took all thoſe from her Colonies only, and it was thought reaſonable that they ſhould take from her only the manufactures which ſhe made. But in Ireland, the climate, ſoil, growth and productions are the ſame as in England, who could give no ſuch equivalent to Ireland as ſhe gave to America, and was ſo far from conſidering her, when this ſyſtem firſt prevailed, as a proper ſubject for ſuch regulations, that ſhe was allowed the benefits ariſing from thoſe Colonies equally with England, until the 15th year of the reign of king Charles * the ſecond. By an act paſſed in that year Ireland had no longer the privilege of ſending any of her exports, except ſervants, horſes, victuals and ſalt, to any of the Colonies;

* 15 Ch. II. ch. 7.

nies; the reaſons are aſſigned in the preamble, "to make this kingdom a ſtaple, not "only of the commodities of thoſe planta-"tions, but alſo of the commodities of other "countries and places for the ſupplying of "them, and it being the uſage of other na-"tions to keep their plantation trade to "themſelves *." At the time of paſſing this law, though leſs liberal ideas in reſpect of Ireland were then entertained, it went no further than not to extend to her the benefit of thoſe Colony regulations; but it was not then thought that this kingdom was a proper ſubject for any ſuch regulations. The ſcheme of ſubſtituting there, inſtead of the woollen, the linen trade, was not at that time thought of. The Engliſh were deſirous to eſtabliſh it among themſelves, and by an act of parliament † made in that year for encouraging the manufacture of linen, granted to all foreigners who ſhall ſet it up in

* As other nations did the ſame, Ireland was ſhut out from the new world, and a conſiderable part of the old in Aſia and Africa.

† 15 Ch. II. ch. 15.

in England, the privileges of natural born ſubjects.

But it appears by the Engliſh ſtatute of the 7th and 8th Will. III*. which has been before ſtated, that this ſcheme had not ſucceeded in England, and from this act it is manifeſt that England conſidered itſelf as well as Ireland intereſted to encourage the linen-manufacture there; and it does not then appear to have been thought juſt, that Ireland ſhould purchaſe this benefit for both, by giving up the exportation of any other manufacture. But in 1698 a different principle prevailed; in effect the ſame, ſo far as relates to the woollen manufacture, with that which had prevailed as to the commerce of the Colonies. This is evident from the preamble of the Engliſh law† made in 1699, "for as much as wool and woollen manu-"factures of cloth, ſerge, bays, kerſies and "other ſtuffs, made or mixed with wool, "are

* Ch. 39.

† 10th and 11th W. III. ch. 10.

" are the greateſt, and moſt profitable com-
" modities of this kingdom, on which the
" value of lands and the trade of the nation
" do chiefly depend, and whereas great quan-
" tities of like manufactures have of late
" been made and are daily encreaſing in the
" kingdom of Ireland, and *in the Engliſh*
" *plantations* in America, and are exported
" from thence to foreign markets, hereto-
" fore ſupplied from England, which will
" inevitably ſink the value of lands, and
" tend to the ruin of the trade and woollen
" manufactures of this realm; for the pre-
" vention whereof and for the encourage-
" ment of the woollen manufactures in this
" kingdom, &c."

The ruinous conſequences of the woollen manufactures of Ireland to the value of lands, trade and manufactures of England, ſtated in this act, are apprehenſions that were entertained, and not events that had happened; and before thoſe facts are taken for granted, I requeſt the miſchiefs recited

in

in the acts * made in England to prevent the importation of cattle dead or alive from Ireland, may be conſidered. The miſchiefs ſtated in thoſe ſeveral laws are ſuppoſed to be as ruinous to England as thoſe recited in the act of 1699, and yet are now allowed to be groundleſs apprehenſions, occaſioned by ſhort and miſtaken views of the real intereſt of England. Sir W. Petty † demonſtrates that the opinion entertained in England at the time of his prohibition of the import of cattle from Ireland was ill-founded; he calls it a ſtrange conceit. If he was now living, he would probably conſider the prohibition of our woollen exports as not having a much better foundation.

Connecting

* 15 Ch. II. ch. 7. 18 Ch. II. ch. 2. 20 Ch. II. ch. 7. 22d and 23d Ch. II. ch. 2. 32 Ch. II. ch. 2.

† Petty's Political Survey of Ireland, 70; and ib. Report from the Council of Trade, 117, 118.

Sir W. Temple, 3 Vol. p. 22, 23, that England was evidently a loſer by the prohibition of Cattle.

Dr. Smith's Memoirs of Wool, 2 Vol. 337, that the Engliſh had ſince ſufficiently felt the miſchiefs of this proceeding.

Connecting this preamble of the act of 1699, with the ſpeech made from the throne to the parliament of Ireland in the year 1698, with the addreſſes of both houſes in England, and with the prohibition, by this and by other acts formerly made in England, of exporting wool from Ireland except to that kingdom, the object of this new commercial regulation is obvious. It was to diſcourage the woollen manufacture in Ireland, and in effect, to prohibit the exportation from thence, becauſe it was the principal branch of manufacture and trade in England, to induce us to ſend to them our materials for that manufacture, and that we ſhould be ſupplied with it by them, and to encourage, as a compenſation to Ireland, the linen manufacture, which was not at that time a commercial object of any importance to England. This I take to be a part of the ſyſtem of colony regulations. Whether it was reaſonable or juſt to bring this kingdom into that ſyſtem, has been already ſubmitted from arguments drawn from the climates and productions of the different

countries. The ſuppoſed compenſation was no more than what Ireland had before; no further encouragement was given by England to our linen manufacture until ſix years after this prohibition, when at the requeſt of the Iriſh houſe of commons, and after a repreſentation of the ruinous ſtate of this country, liberty was given by an Engliſh act of parliament * to export our white and brown linens into the colonies, which was allowing us to do as to one manufacture what, before the 15th of king Charles the ſecond, was permitted in every inſtance.

It would be preſumption in a private man to decide on the weight of thoſe arguments; but to ſelect and arrange facts that lie diſperſed in journals and books of ſtatutes in both kingdoms, and to make obſervations on thoſe facts with caution and reſpect, can never give offence to thoſe who inquire for the purpoſe of relieving a diſtreſſed

* 3 and 4 Ann. ch. 8.

treſſed nation, and of promoting the general welfare.

In that confidence I beg leave to place this ſubject in a different view, and to requeſt that it may be conſidered what the commercial ſyſtem of this kingdom was at the time of paſſing this law of 1699? and whether it was, in this reſpect, reaſonable or juſt that ſuch a regulation ſhould have been then made? The great object which the lords and commons of Great Britain have determined to inveſtigate lead to ſuch a diſcuſſion; determined as they are to purſue effectual methods "for promoting "the common ſtrength, wealth and com-"merce of both kingdoms," what better guides can they follow than the examples of their anceſtors, and the means uſed by them for many centuries, and in the happieſt times, for attaining the ſame great purpoſes.

In my opinion it would be improper, in the preſent ſtate of the Britiſh empire, to

agitate diſputed queſtions that may enflame the paſſions of men. May no ſuch queſtions ever ariſe between two affectionate ſiſter kingdoms! It is my purpoſe only to ſtate acknowledged facts, which never have been conteſted, and from thoſe facts to lay before you the commercial ſyſtem of Ireland before the year 1699.

For ſeveral centuries before this period Ireland was in poſſeſſion of the Engliſh common law *, and of magna charta. The former ſecures the ſubject in the enjoyment of property of every kind; and by the latter *the liberties of all the ports of the kingdom are eſtabliſhed.*

The ſtatutes made in England for the common and public weal, are † by an Iriſh act of the 10th of Henry the 7th, made laws

* 4 Inſt. 349. Matth. Paris, anno 1172. p. 121, 220. Vit. H. 2. Pryn. againſt the 4th Inſt. c. 76, p. 250, 252. Sir John Davis's Hiſt. 71. Lord Lyttleton's Hiſt. of H. 2. 3 Vol. 89, 90. 7 Co. 22. 23. 4th Black. 429.

† Cooke's 4th Inſt. 351.

laws in Ireland; and the Engliſh commercial ſtatutes, in which Ireland is expreſsly mentioned, will place the former ſtate of commerce in this country in a light very different from that in which it has been generally conſidered in Great-Britain.

By the 17th of Edward the 3d, ch. 1. all ſorts of merchandizes may be exported from Ireland, except to the king's enemies.

By the 27th of Edward the 3d, ch. 18. merchants of Ireland and Wales may bring their merchandize to the ſtaple of England; and by the 34th of the ſame king, ch. 17. all kinds of merchandizes may be exported from and imported into Ireland, as well by aliens as denizens. In the ſame year there is another ſtatute, ch. 18. that all perſons who have lands or poſſeſſions in Ireland, might freely import thither, and export from that kingdom *their own commodities*; and by the 50th of Edward the 3d, ch. 8. no alnage is to be paid, if frize ware, which are made in Ireland.

This

This freedom of commerce was beneficial to both countries. It enabled Ireland to be very ſerviceable to Edward the 3d, as it had been to his father and grandfather, in ſupplying numbers of armed veſſels for tranſporting their great lords and their attendants and troops * to Scotland, and alſo to Portſmouth for his French wars.

But the reign of Edward the 4th furniſhes ſtill ſtronger inſtances of the regard ſhewn by England to the trade and manufactures of this country.

In the third year of that monarch's reign the artificers of England complained to parliament that they were greatly impoveriſhed and *could not live* by bringing in divers commodities and wares ready wrought †. An act paſſed reciting thoſe complaints and ordaining that no merchant born a ſubject of the king, denizen or ſtranger, or other perſon ſhould bring into England or Wales any

* Anderſon on Commerce, 1 Vol. 174.

† 3d Edw. 4. ch. 4.

any woollen cloths, &c. and enumerates many other manufactures, on pain of forfeiture; provided that all wares and "chaf-"fers" made and wrought in Ireland or Wales, may be brought in and ſold in the realm of England, as they were wont before the making of that act *.

In the next year another act † paſſed in that kingdom, that all woollen cloth brought into England and ſet to ſale, ſhould be forfeited, except cloths made in Wales or Ireland.

In thoſe reigns England was as careful of the commerce and manufactures of her ancient ſiſter kingdom, particularly in her great ſtaple trade, as ſhe was of her own.

Of this attention there were further inſtances in the years 1468 and 1478. In two treaties

* The part of this law which mentions that it ſhall be determinable at the king's pleaſure, has the prohibition for its object, and does not leſſen the force of the argument in favour of Ireland.

† 4th Edw. IV. ch. 1.

treaties concluded in thoſe years between England and the duke of Bretagne, the merchandize to be traded in between England, Ireland and Calais on the one part, and Bretagne on the other, is ſpecified, and woollen cloths are particularly mentioned*.

And in a treaty between Henry the 7th and the Netherlands, Ireland is included, both as to exports and imports†.

The commercial acts of parliament in which Ireland is mentioned have only been ſtated, becauſe they are not generally known. But the laws made in England before the 10th of Henry the 7th, for the protection of merchants and the ſecurity of trade, being laws for the common and public weal, are alſo made laws here by the Iriſh ſtatute of that year, which was returned under the great ſeal of England, and muſt have been previouſly conſidered in the privy council of that kingdom. At this period then the Engliſh

* Anderſon on Commerce, 1 Vol. 285.

† Ib. 319.

Engliſh commercial ſyſtem and the Iriſh, ſo far as it depended upon the Engliſh ſtatute law, was the ſame; and before this period, ſo far as it depended upon the common law and Magna Charta, was alſo the ſame.

From that time until the 15th of king Charles the 2d, which takes in a period of 167 years, the commercial conſtitution of Ireland was as much favoured and protected as that of England; "the free enlargement "of common traffick which his majeſty's "ſubjects of Ireland enjoyed," is taken notice of, incidentally, in an Engliſh ſtatute, in the reign of king James the 1ſt*; and in 1627 king Charles the 1ſt made a ſtrong declaration in favour of the trade and manufactures of this country. By ſeveral Engliſh ſtatutes in the reign of king Charles the 2d, an equal attention was ſhewn to the woollen manufactures in both kingdoms; in the 12th year of his reign† the exportation of wool, wool-felts, fuller's earth, or any kind of

* 3d James, ch. 6.

† 12th Ch. 2, ch. 32.

of ſcowering-earth, was prohibited from both. But let the reaſons, mentioned in the preamble, for paſſing this law be adverted to, —" for preventing inconveniencies " and loſſes that happened, and that daily " do and may happen to the kingdom of " England, dominion of Wales, and king- " dom of Ireland, through the ſecret expor- " tation of wool out of and from the ſaid " kingdoms and dominions; and for the *better* " *ſetting on work the poor people* and inhabi- " tants of the kingdoms and dominions " aforeſaid, and to the intent that the full " uſe and benefit of *the principal native com-* " *modities* of the ſame kingdom and domini- " on may come, redound and be unto the " ſubjects and inhabitants of the ſame:"

This was the voice of nature, and the dictate of ſound and general policy; it proclaimed to the nations that they ſhould not give to ſtrangers the bread of their own children, that the produce of the ſoil ſhould ſupport the inhabitants of the country, that their induſtry ſhould be exerciſed on their own

own materials, and that the poor ſhould be employed, clothed and fed.

The ſhipping and navigation of England and Ireland were at this time equally favoured and protected. By another act of the ſame year no goods or commodities † of the growth, production or manufacture of Aſia, Africa or America, ſhall be imported into England, *Ireland* or Wales, but in ſhips which belong to the people of England or *Ireland*, the dominion of Wales, or the town of Berwick upon Tweed, or which are of the built of the ſaid lands, and of which the maſter and three-fourths of the mariners are Engliſh; and a ſubſequent ſtatute * makes the encouragement to navigation in both countries equal, by ordaining that the ſubjects of Ireland and of the Plantations ſhall be accounted Engliſh within the meaning of that clauſe. Another law ‡ of the ſame reign ſhews that the navigation

† 12 Ch. 2, ch. 18.
* 13th and 14th Ch. 2, ch. 11.
‡ 13th and 14th Ch. 2, ch. 18.

vigation, commerce and woollen manufactures of both kingdoms were equally protected by the Engliſh legiſlature. This act lays on the ſame reſtraint as the abovementioned act of the 12th of Charles 2d. and makes the tranſgreſſion ſtill more penal. It recites that wool, wool-felts, &c. are ſecretly exported from England and Ireland to foreign parts to the great decay of the woollen manufactures and the deſtruction of the navigation and commerce of *theſe kingdoms*.

From thoſe laws it appears that the commerce, navigation and manufactures of this country were not only favoured and protected by the Engliſh legiſlature, but that we had in thoſe times the full benefit of their Plantation trade; whilſt the woollen manufactures were protected and encouraged in England and Ireland, the planting of tobacco in both was prohibited, becauſe "it "was one of the main products of ſeveral "of the plantations, and upon which their welfare

" welfare and ſubſiſtence do depend †. This policy was liberal, juſt and equal, it opened the reſources and cultivated the ſtrength of every part of the empire.

This commercial ſyſtem of Ireland was enforced by ſeveral acts of her own legiſlature; two ſtatutes paſſed in the reign of Henry the 8th to prevent the exportation of wool, becauſe, ſays the firſt of thoſe laws, " it hath been the cauſe of dearth of " cloth and idleneſs of many folks *," and " tends to the deſolation and ruin of this " poor land." The ſecond of thoſe laws inforces the prohibition § by additional penalties; it recites, " that the ſaid beneficial " law had taken little effect, but that ſince " the making thereof great plenty of wool " had been conveyed out of this land to the " great and ineſtimable hurt, decay and im- " poveriſhment of the king's poor ſubjects " within the ſaid land, for redreſs whereof " and in conſideration that conveying of the " wool

† 12 Ch. 2, ch. 27.

* Ir. act, 13 H. 8, ch. 2. § 28 H. 8, ch. 17.

" wool of the growth of this land out of " the ſame is one of the greateſt occaſions " of the idleneſs of the people, waſte, ruin " and deſolation of the king's cities and bo- " rough towns, and other places of his do- " minion within this land." The 11th of Elizabeth* lays duties on the exportation equal to a prohibition; and the reaſon given in the preamble ought to be mentioned; " that the ſaid commodities may be more " abundantly wrought in this realm ere they " ſhall be ſo tranſported, than preſently they " are, which ſhall ſet many now living idle " on work, to the great relief and commodity " of this realm†.

By the preamble of one of thoſe acts§, made in the reign of Charles the Second, it appears that the ſale of Iriſh woollen goods in

* Ch. 10.

† The neceſſity of encouraging the people of Ireland to manufacture their own wool, appears by divers ſtatutes to have been the ſenſe of the legiſlature of both kingdoms for ſome centuries.

§ Ir. Act of 17 and 18 Ch. 2, ch. 15.

in foreign markets was encouraged by England; "whereas there is a general complaint "in *England*, France, and other parts be- "yond the ſeas, (whither the woollen cloths "and other commodities made of wool in "this his majeſty's kingdom of Ireland are "tranſported) of the falſe, deceitful, uneven, "and uncertain making thereof, which com- "eth to paſs by reaſon that the clothiers "and makers thereof do not obſerve any "certain aſſize for length, breath and "weight for making their clothes and other "commodities aforeſaid in this kingdom, as "they do in the realm of England, and as "they ought alſo to do here; by which "means the merchants, buyers and uſers of "the ſaid cloth and other commodities are "much abuſed and deceived, and the credit, "eſteem and ſale of the ſaid cloth and com- "modities is thereby much impaired and un- "dervalued, to the great and general hurt "and hindrance of the trade of clothing in "this whole realm."

After

After the ports of England were ſhut againſt our cattle, and our trade to the Engliſh colonies was reſtrained, ſtill this commercial ſyſtem was adhered to by encouraging the manufactures of this country, and the exportation of them to foreign countries. In 1667, when the power of the crown was not ſo well underſtood as at preſent, the proclamation before mentioned was publiſhed by the lord lieutenant and privy council of Ireland *, in purſuance of a letter from Charles the Second, by the advice of his council in England, notifying to all his ſubjects of this kingdom, the allowance of a free trade to all foreign countries, either at war or peace with his majeſty.

In the year 1663 the diſtinctions between the trade of England and Ireland †, and the reſtraints on that of the latter commenced. By an Engliſh act paſſed in that year, intitled an act " for the encouragement of " trade,"

* Carte, 2 Vol. p. 344.

† 15 Ch. 2, ch. 7.

"trade," a title not very applicable to the parts of it that related to Ireland, beſides laying a duty nearly equal to a prohibition on cattle imported into England from that kingdom, the exportation of all commodities, except victuals, ſervants, horſes, and ſalt for the fiſheries of New England and Newfoundland, from thence to the Engliſh plantations, was prohibited from the 25th of March, 1764. The exports allowed were uſeful to them, but prejudicial to Ireland, as they conſiſted of our people, our proviſions, and a material for manufacture which we might have uſed more profitably on our own coaſts.

In 1670 another act * paſſed in England, to prohibit from the 24th of March 1671 the exportation from the Engliſh plantations to Ireland of ſeveral materials for manufactures †, without firſt unloading in England

* 22d and 23d Ch. 2d, ch. 26.

† Sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, ſteel or Jamaica wood, fuſtick, or other dying wood, the growth of the ſaid plantations.

or Wales. We are informed by this act that the reſtraint of the exportation from the Engliſh plantations to Ireland was intended by the act of 1663; but the intention is not effectuated, though the importation of thoſe commodities into Ireland *from England*, without firſt unloading there, is, in effect, prohibited by that act.

The prohibition of importing into Ireland any plantation goods, unleſs the ſame had been firſt landed in England, and had paid the duties, is made general, without any exception, by the Engliſh act of the 7th and 8th W. 3d, ch. 22.

But by ſubſequent Britiſh acts*, it is made lawful to import from his majeſty's plantations, all goods of their growth or manufactures, the articles enumerated in thoſe ſeveral acts excepted†.

By

* 4 Geo. 2, ch. 15. 6 G. 2, ch. 15. 4 G. 2, ch. 15.

† The articles in the laſt note, and alſo rice, molaſſes, beaver ſkins and other furs, copper ore, pitch, tar, turpentine,

By a late Britiſh act‡ there is a conſiderable extenſion of the exports from Ireland to the Britiſh plantations. But it is apprehended that this law will not anſwer the kind intentions of the Britiſh legiſlature. Denying the import from thoſe countries to Ireland, is, in effect, preventing the export

tine, maſts, yards and bowſprits, pimento, cocoa nuts, whale fins, raw ſilk, hides and ſkins, pot and pearl aſhes, iron and lumber.

‡ From the 24th of June 1778, it ſhall be lawful to export from Ireland directly into any of the Britiſh plantations in America, or the Weſt Indies, or into any of the ſettlements belonging to Great Britain on the coaſt of Africa, any goods being the produce or manufacture of Ireland (wool and woollen manufactures in all its branches, mixed or unmixed, cotton manufactures of all ſorts mixed or unmixed, hats, glaſs, hops, gun-powder and coals, only excepted) and all goods, &c. of the growth, produce or manufacture of Great Britain, which may be legally imported from thence into Ireland (woollen manufactures in all its branches, and glaſs, excepted) and all foreign certificate goods that may be legally imported from Great Britain into Ireland. Two of the principal manufactures are excepted, and one of them cloſely connected with, if not a part of the linen manufacture.—18 Geo. 3, ch. 55.

from Ireland to thoſe countries. Money cannot be expected for our goods there; we muſt take theirs in exchange, and this can never anſwer on the terms of our being obliged, in our return, to paſs by Ireland, to land thoſe goods in England, to ſhip them a ſecond time, and then to ſail back again to Ireland. No trade will bear ſuch an unneceſſary delay and expence. The quickneſs and the ſecurity of the return are the great inducements to every trade. One is loſt and the other hazarded by ſuch embarraſſments; thoſe who are not ſubject to them carry on the trade with ſuch advantages over thoſe who are ſo entangled, as totally to exclude them from it. This is no longer the ſubject of ſpeculation, it has been proved by the experience of above ſeventy years. Since the year 1705, when liberty was given to import white and brown linens from Ireland into the Engliſh plantations, the quantities ſent there directly from Ireland were at all times very inconſiderable; notwithſtanding this liberty they were ſent for the moſt part from Ireland to England,

England, before any bounty was given on the exportation from thence, which did not take place until the year 1743, and from England the Engliſh plantations were ſupplied. There cannot be a more deciſive proof that the liberty of exporting without a direct import in return, will not be beneficial to Ireland.

This country is the part of the Britiſh empire moſt conveniently ſituated for trade with the colonies; if not ſuffered to have any beneficial intercourſe with them, ſhe will be deprived of one of the great advantages of her ſituation; and ſuch an obſtruction to the proſperity of ſo conſiderable a part, muſt neceſſarily diminiſh the ſtrength of the whole Britiſh empire.

Thoſe laws laid Ireland under reſtraints highly prejudicial to her commerce and navigation. From thoſe countries the materials for ſhip-building *, and ſome of thoſe uſed

* This appears by the Engliſh acts (3 and 4 Ann. ch. 10. 8 Ann. ch. 13. 2 Geo 2d, ch. 35.) giving bounties on the importation of thoſe articles into Great Britain.

uſed in perfecting their ſtaple manufactures were had; Ireland was by thoſe laws excluded from almoſt all the trade of three quarters of the globe, and from all direct beneficial intercourſe with her fellow-ſubjects in thoſe countries, which were partly ſtocked from her own loins. But ſtill, though deprived at that time of the benefit of thoſe colonies, ſhe was not then conſidered as a colony herſelf; her manufacturers were not in any other manner diſcouraged, her ports were left open, and ſhe was at liberty to look for a market among ſtrangers, though not among her fellow-ſubjects in Aſia, Africa or America *. By the law of 1699 ſhe

* Sir William Petty mentions that "the Engliſh who have "lands in Ireland were forced to trade only with ſtrangers, "and became unacquainted with their own country, and "that England gained more than it loſt by a free com-"merce (with Ireland), as exporting hither three times "as much as it received from hence;" and mentions his ſurprize at their being debarred from bringing commodities from America directly home, and being obliged to bring them round from England with extreme hazard and loſs.—Political Survey of Ireland, p. 123.

ſhe was, as to her ſtaple manufacture, deprived of thoſe reſources; ſhe was brought within a ſyſtem of colonization, but on worſe terms than any of the plantations who were allowed to trade with each other †.

She could ſend her principal materials for manufacture to England only; but thoſe manufactures were encouraged in England and diſcouraged in Ireland. The probable conſequence of which was, and the event has anſwered the expectation, that we ſhould take thoſe manufactures from that country, and that therefore in thoſe various trades which employ the greateſt numbers of men, the Engliſh ſhould work for our people. The rich ſhould work for the poor!

Let the hiſtories of both kingdoms, and the ſtatute books of both parliaments be examined, and no precedent will be found for

† 22d and 23d Ch. 2d, ch. 26. Sec. 11.

for the act of 1699, or for the ſyſtem which it introduced.

The whole tenor of the Engliſh ſtatutes relative to the trade of this country, and which by our act of the 10th of Hen. VII. became a part of our commercial conſtitution, breath a ſpirit totally repugnant to the principle of that law, and it is therefore with the utmoſt deference ſubmitted to thoſe who have the power to decide, whether this law was agreeable to the commercial conſtitution of Ireland, which for 500 years has never produced a ſimilar inſtance.

It might be naturally ſuppoſed, by a perſon not verſed in our ſtory, that in the ſeventeenth century there had been ſome offence given, or ſome demerit on our part. He would be ſurprized to hear that during this period our loyalty had been exemplary, and our ſufferings on that account great. In 1641, great numbers of the proteſtants of Ireland were deſtroyed, and many of them were

were deprived of their property, and driven out of their country from their attachment to the Engliſh government in this kingdom, and to that religion and conſtitution which they happily enjoyed under it. At the revolution they were conſtant in the ſame principles, and ſucceſsfully ſtaked their lives and properties againſt domeſtick and foreign enemies, in ſupport of the rights of the Engliſh crown, and of the religious and civil liberties of Britain and of Ireland. They bravely ſhared with her in all her dangers, and liberally partook of all her adverſities. Whatever were their rights they had forfeited none of them. Whatever favours they enjoyed, they had new claims, from their merit and their ſufferings, to a continuance of them. They now wanted more than ever the care of that foſtering hand, which by reſcuing them twice from oppreſſion (obligations never to be forgotten by the proteſtants of Ireland) eſtabliſhed the liberties, confirmed the ſtrength, and raiſed the glory of the Britiſh empire.

In

In ſpeaking of a commercial ſyſtem it is not intended to touch upon the power of making or altering laws; the preſent ſubject leads us only to conſider whether that power has been exerciſed, in any inſtances, contrary to reaſon, juſtice, and public utility,

When we conſider, with the utmoſt deference to eſtabliſhed authority, what is *reaſonable*, *uſeful and juſt*, principles equally applicable to an independent or a ſubordinate, to a rich or a poor country—

Quod æque pauperibus prodeſt, locupletibus æque.—

Should any man talk of a conqueſt above 500 years ſince, between kingdoms long united, like thoſe, in blood, intereſt and conſtitution, he does not ſpeak to the purpoſe; he may as well talk of the conqueſt of the Norman, and uſe the antiquated language of obſolete deſpotiſm. I revere that conqueſt which has given to [illegible]nd the

the common law and the Magna Charta of England.

When we conſider what is *reaſonable, uſeful and juſt*, and addreſs our ſentiments to a nation renowned for wiſdom and juſtice, ſhould pride pervert the queſtion, talk of the power of Britain, and in the character of that great country, aſk, like Tancred, who ſhall controul me? I anſwer, like the ſober Siffredi——*thyſelf.*

The power of regulating trade in a great empire is perverted, when exerciſed for the deſtruction of trade in any part of it; but whatever or wherever that power is, if it ſays to the ſubject on one ſide of a channel, you may work and navigate, buy and ſell; and to the ſubject on the other ſide, you ſhall not work or navigate, buy or ſell, but under ſuch reſtrictions as will extinguiſh the genius, and unnerve the arm of induſtry; I will only ſay that it uſes a language repugnant to the free ſpirit of commerce, and of the Britiſh and Iriſh conſtitution.

Great

Great eulogiums on the virtues of our people have been pronounced by ſome of the moſt reſpected Engliſh authors*; yet indolence is objected to them by thoſe who diſcourage their induſtry; but they do not reflect that each of theſe proceeds from habit, and that the noble obſervation made on virtue in general is equally applicable to induſtry—the day that it loſes its liberty half of its vigour is gone †.

The great expenditure of money by England, on account of this country, is an argument more fit for the limited views of a compting-houſe, than for the enlarged policy of ſtateſmen deliberating on the general good of a great empire.

Very large ſums, it is true, were advanced by England for the relief and recovery of Ireland; but theſe have been reimburſed fifty fold by the profits and advantages which

* Sir John Davis and Sir Edward Cooke.

† Νμισυ Γαρ τάρεις ηαποαινυται Δουλιον ημαρ.

Homer, as quoted by Longinus.

which have ſince ariſen to England from its trade and intercourſe with this kingdom. This argument may be further purſued, but accounts of mutual benefits between intimate friends and near relations ſhould be always kept open, and every attempt to ſtrike a balance between them tends rather to raiſe jealouſies than to promote good will.

It has been ſaid that the intereſt of England required that thoſe reſtraints ſhould be impoſed. The contrary has been ſhewn; one of the maxims of her own law inſtructs us to enjoy our own property ſo as not to injure that of our neighbour *; and the true intereſt of a great country lies in the population, wealth and ſtrength of the whole empire.

If this reſtrictive ſyſtem was founded in juſtice and ſound policy towards the middle and at the concluſion of the laſt century, the preſent ſtate of the Britiſh empire requires new counſels, and a ſyſtem of commerce

* Sic utere tuo, alienum non Lædas.

merce and of policy totally different from thoſe which the circumſtances of theſe countries, in the years 1663, 1670 and 1698, might have ſuggeſted.

But it is time to give your lordſhip a little relief, before I enter into a new part of my ſubject.

I have the honour to be,

My lord, &c.

THE

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

EIGHTH LETTER.

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

EIGHTH LETTER.

My Lord,

Dublin, 6th September, 1779.

BETWEEN the 23d of October, 1641, and the ſame day in the year 1652, five hundred and four thouſand of the inhabitants of Ireland are ſaid to have periſhed and been waſted by the ſword, plague, famine, hardſhip and baniſhment *, If it had not been for the numbers of Britiſh which thoſe wars had brought over †, and ſuch who either as

O adventurers

* Sir William Petty's Political Survey of Ireland, p. 19.

† Sir William Temple, 3 Vol. p. 7.

adventurers or ſoldiers ſeated themſelves here on account of the ſatisfaction made to them in lands, the country had been by the rebellion of 1641, and the plague that followed it, nearly deſolate. At the reſtoration almoſt the whole property of the kingdom was in a ſtate of the utmoſt anarchy and confuſion. To ſatisfy the claſhing intereſts of the numerous claimants, and to determine the various and intricate diſputes that aroſe relative to titles, required a conſiderable length of time. Peace and ſettlement, or, to uſe the words of one of the acts of parliament * of that time, the repairing the ruins and deſolation of the kingdom were the great objects of this period.

The Engliſh law † of 1663, reſtraining the exportation from Ireland to America, was at that time, and for ſome years after, ſcarcely felt in this kingdom, which had then little to export except live cattle, not proper for ſo diſtant a market.

The

* The act of Explanation.

† 15 Ch. II.

The act of ſettlement paſſed in Ireland the year before this reſtrictive law, and the explanatory ſtatute for the ſettlement of this kingdom, was not enacted until two years after. The country continued for a conſiderable time in a ſtate of litigation, which is never favorable to induſtry. In 1661 the people muſt have been poor; the number of them of all degrees, who paid poll money in that year was about 360,000*. In 1672, when the country had greatly improved, the manufacture beſtowed upon a year's exportation from Ireland, did not exceed eight thouſand pounds†, and the clothing trade had not then arrived to what it had been before the laſt rebellion. But ſtill the kingdom had much increaſed in wealth, tho' not in manufactured exports. The cuſtoms which ſet in 1656 for 12,000l. yearly, were in 1672 worth 80,000l.‡ yearly, and the improvement in domeſtic wealth, that is to ſay, in building, planting, furniture,

* Sir W. Petty, p 9.
† Ib. 9. and 110.
‡ Ib. 89.

coaches, &c. is ſaid to have advanced from 1652 to 1673 in a proportion of from one to four. Sir William Petty in the year 1672 complains not of the reſtraints on the exportation from Ireland to America *, but of the prohibition of exporting our cattle to England, and of our being obliged to unlade in that kingdom † the ſhips bound from America to Ireland; the latter regulation he conſiders as highly prejudicial to this country †.

The immediate object of Ireland at this time, ſeems to have been to get materials to employ her people at home without thinking of foreign exportations. When we advanced in the export of our woollen goods, the law of 1663 ‡, which excluded them from the American markets, muſt have been a great loſs to this kingdom; and after we were allowed to export our linens to the Britiſh colonies in America, the reſtraints impoſed

* Sir W. Petty, p. 9 and 10.
Ib. 34, 71, 125.
‡ 15 Ch. II. ch. 7.

impoſed by the law of 1670 upon our importations from thence became more prejudicial, and will be much more ſo if ever the late extenſion of our exports to America ſhould under thoſe reſtraints have any effect. For it is certainly a great diſcouragement to the carrying on trade with any country where we are allowed only to ſell our manufactures and produce, but are not permitted to carry from them directly to our own country their principal manufactures or produce. The people to whom we are thus permitted to ſell, want the principal inducement for dealing with us, and the great ſpring of commerce, which is mutual exchange, is wanting between us.

As the Britiſh legiſlature has thought it reaſonable to extend, in a very conſiderable degree, our exportation to their colonies, and has doubtleſs intended that this favour ſhould be uſeful to Ireland, it is hoped that thoſe reſtraints on the importation from thence, which muſt render that favour of little effect, will be no longer continued.

From

From thoſe conſiderations it is evident that many ſtrong reaſons reſpecting Ireland are now to be found againſt the continuance of thoſe reſtrictive laws of 1663 and 1670, that did not exiſt at the time of making them.

The prohibition of 1699 was immediately and univerſally felt in this country; but in the courſe of human events various and powerful reaſons have ariſen againſt the continuance of that ſtatute, which did not exiſt, and could not have been foreſeen when it was enacted.

At the reſtoration the inhabitants of Ireland conſiſted of three different nations, Engliſh, Scotch and Iriſh, divided by political and religious principles, exaſperated againſt each other by former animoſities, and by preſent conteſts for property. When the ſettlement of the country was compleated, the people became induſtrious, manufactures greatly increaſed, and the kingdom began to flouriſh. The prohibition of exporting cattle to England, and, perhaps, that

of

of importing directly from America the materials of other manufactures, obliged the Iriſh to increaſe, and to manufacture their own material. They made ſo great a progreſs in both, from 1672 to 1687, that in the latter year the exports of the woollen manufacture alone amounted in value to 70,521l. 14s. 0d.

But the religious and civil animoſities continued. The papiſts objected to the ſettlement of property made after the reſtoration *, wiſhed to reverſe the outlawries and to reſcind the laws on which that ſettlement was founded, hoped to eſtabliſh their own as the national religion, to get the power of the kingdom into their own hands, and to effect all thoſe purpoſes by a king of their own religion. They endeavoured to attain all thoſe objects by laws † paſſed at a meeting, which they called a parliament, held under this prince

* Carte, 2 Vol. 425 to 428, 465.

† Archb. Biſhop King's State, 209. James the 2d in his ſpeech from the throne in Ireland, recommended the repeal of the act of ſettlement.

prince after his abdication; and by their conduct at this period, as well as in the year 1642*, ſhewed diſpoſitions unfavourable to the ſubordination of Ireland to the crown of England. They could not be ſuppoſed to be well affected to that great Prince who defeated all their purpoſes.

At the time of the revolution the numbers of our people were again very much reduced; but a great majority of the remaining inhabitants conſiſted of papiſts. Thoſe, notwithſtanding their diſappointment at that æra, were thought to entertain expectations of the reſtoration of their popiſh king, and deſigns unfavorable to the eſtabliſhed conſtitution in church and ſtate. It is not to the preſent purpoſe to inquire how long this

* Their demands in 1642 were the reſtitution of all the plantation lands to the old inhabitants, repeal of Poyning's act, &c. Macaulay's Hiſt. 3 Vol. 222. In the meeting, called a parliament, held by James in Ireland, they repealed the acts of ſettlement and explanation, paſſed a law that the parliament of England cannot bind Ireland, and againſt writs of error and appeals to England.

this diſpoſition prevailed. It cannot be doubted but that this was the opinion conceived of their views and principles at the time of paſſing this law of the year 1699.

England could not then conſider a country under ſuch unfortunate circumſtances as any great additional ſtrength to it. Foreign proteſtants were invited to ſettle in it, and the emigration of papiſts in great numbers to other countries was allowed, if not encouraged. Though at this period a regard to liberty as well as to œconomy, occaſioned the diſbanding of all the army in England, except 7000, it was thought neceſſary for the ſecurity of Ireland that an army of 12,000 men ſhould be kept there; and for many years afterwards it was not allowed that this army ſhould be recruited in this kingdom. This diſtinction of parties in Ireland was in thoſe times the main ſpring in every movement relative to that kingdom, and affected not only political but commercial regulations. The reaſon aſſigned by the Engliſh ſtatute, allowing the exportation of

of Iriſh linen cloth to the plantations, is, after reciting the reſtrictive law of 1663*, "*yet* foraſmuch as the proteſtant intereſt of "Ireland ought to be ſupported, by giving "the utmoſt encouragement to the linen "manufactures of that kingdom, in tender "regard to her majeſty's good proteſtant "ſubjects of her ſaid kingdom, be it enacted," &c.

The papiſts, then diſabled from acquiring permanent property in lands, had not the ſame intereſt with proteſtants in the defence of their country and in the proſperity of the Britiſh empire. But thoſe ſeeds of diſunion and diffidence no longer remain. No man looks now for the return of the exiled family, any more than for that of Perken Warbec; and the repeal of magna charta is as much expected as of the act of ſettlement. The papiſts, indulged with the exerciſe of their religious worſhip, and now at liberty to acquire permanent property in

* 3d and 4th Anne, ch. 8.

in lands, are intereſted as well as proteſtants in the ſecurity and proſperity of this country; and ſenſible of the benign influence of our ſovereign, and of the protection and happineſs which they enjoy under his reign, ſeem to be as well affected to the king and to the conſtitution of the ſtate as any other claſs of ſubjects, and at this moſt dangerous criſis have contributed their money to raiſe men for his majeſty's ſervice, and declared their readineſs, had the laws permitted, to have taken arms for the defence of their country. They owe much to the favour and protection of the crown, and to the liberal and benevolent ſpirit of the Britiſh legiſlature which led the way to their relief, and they are peculiarly intereſted to cultivate the good opinion of their ſovereign, and of their fellow-ſubjects in Great Britain.

The numbers of our people, ſince the year 1698, are more than doubled; but in point of real ſtrength to the Britiſh empire are increaſed in a proportion of above eight

to

to one. In the year 1698, the numbers of our people did not much, if at all, exceed one million. Of theſe 300,000 are thought to be a liberal allowance for proteſtants of all denominations. It is now ſuppoſed that there are not leſs in this kingdom than 2,500,000 inhabitants, loyal and affectionate ſubjects to his majeſty, and well-affected to the conſtitution and happineſs of their country.

A political and commercial conſtitution, if it could have been conſidered as wiſely framed for the years 1663, 1670 and 1698, ought to be reconſidered in the year 1779; what mighthave been good and neceſſary policy in the government of one million of men diſunited among themſelves, and a majority of them not to be relied upon in ſupport of their king and of the laws and conſtitution of their country, is bad policy in the government of two millions and a half of men now united among themſelves, and all intereſted in the ſupport of the crown, the laws, and the conſtitution.

What

What might have been ſufficient employment, and the means of acquiring a competent ſubſiſtence for one million of people, when a man by working two days in the week might have earned a ſufficient ſupport for him and his family, will never anſwer for two millions and a half of people*, when the hard labour of ſix days in the week can ſcarcely ſupply a ſcanty ſubſiſtence. Nor can the reſources which enabled us in the laſt century to remit 200,000l. yearly to England†, ſupport remittances to the amount of more than ſix times that ſum.

Let the reaſons for this reſtrictive ſyſtem at the time of its formation be examined, and let us judge impartially, whether any one of the purpoſes then intended has been anſwered. The reaſons reſpecting America, were to confine the Plantation-trade to England, and to make that country a ſtore-houſe of all commodities for its colonies. But

* Sir W. Petty's Survey.

† Ib. 117.

But the commercial jealouſy that has prevailed among the different ſtates of Europe, has made it difficult for any nation to keep great markets to herſelf in excluſion of the reſt of the world. It was not foreſeen at thoſe periods that the colonies, whilſt they all continued dependent, ſhould have traded with foreign nations, notwithſtanding the utmoſt efforts of Great Britain to prevent it. It was not foreſeen that thoſe colonies would have refuſed to have taken any commodities whatever from their parent country, that they ſhould afterwards have ſeparated themſelves from her empire, declared themſelves independent, reſiſted her fleets and armies, obtained the moſt powerful alliances, and occaſioned the moſt dangerous and deſtructive war in which Great Britain was ever engaged. Nor could it have been foreſeen that Ireland, excluded from almoſt all direct intercouſe with them, ſhould have been nearly undone by the conteſt. The reaſons then reſpecting America no longer exiſt, and whatever may be the event of the conflict, will never exiſt to the extent

expected

expected when this ſyſtem of reſtraints and penalties was adopted.

The reaſons relating to Ireland have failed alſo. The circumſtances of this country relative to the woollen manufacture are totally changed ſince the year 1699. The lords and commons of England appear to have founded the law of that year on the proportion which they ſuppoſed that the charge of the woollen manufacture in England then bore to the charge of that manufacture in Ireland. In the repreſentation from the commiſſioners of trade, laid before both houſes †, they think it a reaſonable conjecture to take the difference between both wool and labour in the two countries to be one third; and eſtimating on that ſuppoſition, they find that $43\frac{7}{8}$ per cent, may be laid on broad cloth exported out of Ireland, more than on the like cloth exported out of England, to bring them both to

† Order 14th March 1698, Lords Journ. v. 16. Eng. Com. Journs. 18th Jan. 1698, 12 v. 440.

to an equality. This muſt have been an alarming repreſentation to England.

But if thoſe calculations were juſt at the time, which is very doubtful, the ſuppoſed facts on which they were founded do certainly no longer exiſt. Wool is now generally at a higher price in Ireland than in England, and the trifling difference in the price of labour is more than over-balanced by this and the other circumſtances in favour of England, which have been before ſtated; and that thoſe facts ſuppoſed in 1698, and the inferences drawn from them, have no foundation in the preſent ſtate of this country is plain from the experience of every day, which ſhews that inſtead of our underſelling the Engliſh, they underſell us in our own markets.

Beſides our excluſion from foreign markets, England had two objects in the diſcouragement of our woollen trade.

It was intended that Ireland ſhould ſend her wool to England, and take from that country

country her woollen manufactures*. It has been already ſhewn that the firſt object has not been attained; the ſecond has been carried ſo far as, for the future, to defeat its own purpoſe. Whilſt our own manufacturers were ſtarving for want of employment, and our wool ſold for leſs than one half of its uſual price, we have imported from England in the years 1777 and 1778 woollen goods to the enormous amount of 715,740l 13s 0d as valued at our cuſtom-houſe, and of the manufactures of linen, cotton and ſilk mixed, to the amount of 98,086l 1s 11d, making in the whole in

* The commiſſioners of trade, in their repreſentation dated the 11th November 1697, relating to the trade between England and Ireland, adviſe a duty to be laid upon the importation of oil, upon teaſles, whether imported or *growing* there, and upon *all the utenſils* employed in the making any woollen manufactures, on the utenſils of worſted-combers, and particularly a duty by the yard upon all cloth and woollen ſtuffs, except frizes, before they are taken off the loom. Eng. Com. Journ. 12 v. 428.

thoſe two years of diſtreſs 813,826l 14s 11d†. Between 20 and 30,000 of our manufacturers in thoſe branches were in thoſe two years ſupported by public charity. From this fact it is hoped that every reaſonable man will allow the neceſſity of our uſing our own manufactures. Agreements among our people for this purpoſe are not, as it has been ſuppoſed, a new idea in this country. It was never ſo univerſal as at preſent, but has been frequently reſorted to in times of diſtreſs. In the ſeſſions of 1703, 1705 and 1707‡, the houſe of commons reſolved unanimouſly, that it would greatly conduce to the relief of the poor and the good of the kingdom, that the inhabitants thereof ſhould uſe none other but the manufactures of this kingdom in their apparel and the furniture of their houſes; and in the laſt of thoſe ſeſſions the members engaged their honours

† See in the appendix an account of thoſe articles imported from England into Ireland, for ten years, commencing in 1769, and ending in 1778.

‡ Com. Journ. 3 vol. 348, 548.

honours to each other, that they would conform to the ſaid reſolution. The not importing goods from England is one of the remedies recommended by the council of trade in 1676 for alleviating ſome diſtreſs that was felt at that time*; and ſir William Temple, a zealous friend to the trade and manufactures of England, recommends to lord Eſſex, then lord lieutenant, "to intro-duce as far as can be, a vein of parſimony "throughout the country, in all things that "are not perfectly the native growths and "manufactures.§"

The people of England can not reaſonably object to a conduct of which they have given a memorable example‡. In 1697 the Engliſh houſe of lords preſented an addreſs to king William to diſcourage the uſe and wearing of all ſorts of furniture and cloths, not of the growth or manufac-

* Sir W. Petty's Political Survey, 123.

§ Sir W. Temple, 3 v. 11.

‡ Lords Journ. 16th Feb. 1697.

ture of that kingdom, and beſeech him by his royal example effectually to encourage the uſe and wearing of all ſorts of furniture and wearing cloths that are the growth of that kingdom, or manufactured there; and king William aſſures them that he would give the example to his ſubjects‡, and would endeavour to make it effectually followed. The reaſon aſſigned by the lords for this addreſs was, that the trade of the nation had ſuffered by the late long and expenſive war. But it does not appear that there was any preſſing neceſſity at the time, or that their manufacturers were ſtarving for want of employment.

Common ſenſe muſt diſcover to every man that, where foreign trade is reſtrained, diſcouraged, or prevented in any country, and where that country has the materials of manufactures, a fruitful ſoil, and numerous inhabitants, the home-trade is its beſt reſource. If this is thought, by men of great knowledge, to be the moſt valuable of all trades,

‡ Lords Journ. 19th Feb. 1697.

trades §, becauſe it makes the ſpeedieſt and the ſureſt returns, and becauſe it increaſes at the ſame time two capitals in the ſame country, there is no nation on the globe, whoſe wealth, population, ſtrength and happineſs would be promoted by ſuch a trade in a greater degree than ours *.

Two other reaſons were aſſigned for this prohibition,—that the Iriſh had ſhewn themſelves unwilling to promote the linen manufacture †; and that there were great quantities of wool in Ireland. But they have ſince cultivated the linen trade with great ſucceſs, and great numbers of their people

§ See Dr. Smith's Wealth of Nations.

* The conſumption of our own people is the beſt and greateſt market for the product and manufactures of our own country. Foreign trade is but a part of the benefit ariſing from the woollen manufacture, and the leaſt part; it is a ſmall article in reſpect to the benefit ariſing to the community; and Dr. Smith affirms that all the foreign markets of England cannot be equal to one-twentieth part of her own. Dr. Smith's memoirs of wool, 2 vol. 113, 529, 530 and 556, from the Britiſh merchant and Dr. Davenant.

† Addreſs of Eng. Commons, ante.

people are employed in it. Of late years, by the operation of the land-carriage bounty agriculture has increaſed in a degree never before known in this country; extenſive tracts of lands, formerly ſheep-paſture, are now under tillage, and much greater rents are given for that purpoſe than can be paid by ſtocking with ſheep; the quantity of wool is greatly diminiſhed from what it was in the year 1699, ſuppoſing it to have been then equal to the quantity in 1687*; it has been for ſeveral years leſſening, and is not likely to be increaſed. In thoſe two important circumſtances the grounds of the apprehenſions of England have ceaſed, and the ſtate of Ireland has been materially altered ſince the year 1699.

Another reaſon reſpecting England and foreign ſtates, particularly France, has failed. England was in 1698, in poſſeſſion of the woollen trade in moſt of the foreign markets, and expected ſtill to continue to ſupply

* King's Stat. 160, 161.

ſupply them, as appears by the preamble of her ſtatute paſſed in that year.

She at that time expected to keep this manufacture to herſelf. The people of Leeds, Hallifax and Newberry† petition the houſe of commons, "that by ſome means "the woollen manufacture may be prevent-"ed from being ſet up in foreign countries;" and the commons in their addreſs, mention the keeping it as much as poſſible *entire* to themſelves. But experience has proved the vanity of thoſe expectations; ſeveral other countries cultivate this trade with ſucceſs. France now underſells her. England has loſt ſome of thoſe markets, and it is thought probable that Ireland, if admitted to them, might have preſerved and may now recover the trade that England has loſt.

A perſeverance in this reſtrictive policy will be ruinous to the trade of Great Britain. Whatever may be the ſtate of America, great numbers of the inhabitants of Ireland, if the circumſtances of this country ſhall continue to be the ſame as at preſent in reſpect of

† Eng. Com. Journ. 12 v. 514, 523, 528.

of trade, will emigrate there; this will give ſtrength to that part of the empire on which Great Britain can leaſt, and take it from that part on which at preſent ſhe may moſt ſecurely depend. But this is not all the miſchief; thoſe emigrants will be moſtly manufacturers, and will transfer to America the woollen and linen manufactures, to the great prejudice of thoſe trades in England, Scotland and Ireland; and then one of the means uſed to keep the colonies dependent, by introducing this country into a ſyſtem of colonization, will be the occaſion of leſſening, if not diſſolving, the connection between them and their parent ſtate.

Great Britain, weakened in her extremities, ſhould fortify the heart of her empire; Great Britain, with powerful foreign enemies united in laſting bonds againſt her, and with ſcarcely any foreign alliance to ſuſtain her, ſhould exert every poſſible effort to ſtrengthen herſelf at home. The numbers of people in Ireland have more than doubled in fourſcore years. How much more rapid would be the increaſe if the growth of

the

the human race was cheriſhed by finding ſufficient employment and food for this prolific nation! it would probably double again in half a century. What a vaſt acceſſion of ſtrength ſuch numbers of brave and active men, living almoſt within the ſound of a trumpet, muſt bring to Great Britain, now ſaid to be decreaſing conſiderably in population! a greater certainly than double thoſe numbers diſperſed in diſtant parts of the globe, the expence of defending and governing of which muſt at all times be great. Sir W. Temple * in 1673 takes notice of the circumſtances prejudicial to the trade and riches of Ireland, which had hitherto, he ſays, made it of more loſs than value to England. They have already been mentioned. The courſe of time has removed ſome of them, and the wiſdom and philantrophy of Britain may remove the reſt. "Without "theſe circumſtances, (ſays that honeſt and "able ſtateſman,) the native fertility of the "ſoils and ſeas in ſo many rich commodities,

"improved

* 3 vol. 8.

" improved by multitudes of people and in-
" duſtry, with the advantage of ſo many ex-
" cellent havens, and a ſituation ſo commo-
" dious for all ſorts of foreign trade, muſt
" needs have rendered this kingdom one of
" the richeſt in Europe, and made a mighty
" increaſe both of ſtrength and revenue to
" the crown of England*."

During this century Ireland has been without exaggeration, a mine of wealth to England, far beyond what any calculation has yet made it. When poor and thinly inhabited ſhe was an expence and a burden to England; when ſhe had acquired ſome proportion of riches and grew more numerous, ſhe was one of the principal ſources of her wealth. When ſhe becomes poor again, thoſe advantages are greatly diminiſhed. The exports from Great Britain to Ireland in 1778† were leſs, that the medium value of the four preceding

* See Sir John Davis's Diſcourſes, p. 5, 6, 194.

† Summary of imports and exports to and from Ireland, laid before the Britiſh houſe of commons in 1779.

preceding years in a ſum of 634,444l. 3s. 0d; and in the year 1779 Great Britain is obliged, partly at her own expence, to defend this country, and for that purpoſe has generouſly beſtowed out of her own exchequer a large ſum of money. Thoſe facts demonſtrate that the poverty of Ireland ever has been a drain, and her riches an influx of wealth to England, to which the greater part of it will ever flow, and it imports not to that country through what channel: but the ſource muſt be cleared from obſtructions, or the ſtream cannot continue to flow.

Such a liberal ſyſtem would increaſe the wealth of this kingdom by means that would ſtrengthen the hands of government, and promote the happineſs of the people. Ireland would be then able to contribute largely to the ſupport of the Britiſh empire, not only from the increaſe of her wealth, but from the more equal diſtribution of it into a greater number of hands among the various orders of the community. The preſent inability of Ireland ariſes principally from this circumſtance,

circumſtance, that her lower and middle claſſes have little or no property, and are not able, to any conſiderable amount, either to pay taxes, or to conſume thoſe commodities that are the uſual ſubjects of them; and this has been the conſequence of the laws which prevent trade and diſcourage manufactures. The ſame quantity of property diſtributed through the different claſſes of the people would ſupply reſources much ſuperior to thoſe which can be found in the preſent ſtate of Ireland*. The increaſe of people there under its preſent reſtraints makes but a ſmall addition to the reſources of the ſtate in reſpect of taxes†. In 1685 the amount

* Thoſe ſtates are leaſt able to pay great charge for public diſburſements, whoſe wealth reſteth chiefly in the hands of the nobility and gentry. Bac. 1 Vol. p. 10. Smith's Wealth of Nations, 2 Vol. p. 22.

† A very judicious friend of mine has, with great pains and attention, made a calculation of the numbers of people in Ireland in the year 1774, and he makes the numbers of people to amount to 2,325,041, but ſuppoſes his calculation to be under the real number. I have therefore followed the calculation commonly received, which makes their number

of the inland exciſe in Ireland was 75,169l. In 1762 it increaſed only to 92,842l. Thoſe years are taken as periods of a conſiderable degree of proſperity in Ireland. The people had increaſed from 1685 to 1762 in a proportion of nearly 7 to 4*, which appears from this circumſtance, that in 1685 hearth money amounted to 32,659l. and in 1762 to 56,611l. At the former period the law made to reſtrain and diſcourage the principal trade and manufacture of Ireland had not been made. There were then vaſt numbers of ſheep in Ireland, and the woollen manufacture was probably in a flouriſhing ſtate. At the former of thoſe periods the lower claſſes of the people were able to conſume exciſable commo-

number amount to 2,500,000. He computes, as has been before mentioned, the perſons who reſide in houſes of one hearth, to be 1,877,220. Thoſe find it very difficult to pay hearth-money, and are thought to be unable to pay any other taxes. If this is ſo, according to this calculation, there are but 447,821 people in Ireland able to pay taxes.

* Ireland was much more numerous in 1685 than at any time, after the revolution, during that century, there having been a great waſte of people in the rebellion at that æra.

commodities. In the latter they lived for the moſt part on the immediate produce of the ſoil. The numbers of people in a ſtate, like thoſe of a private family, if the individuals have the means of acquiring, add to the wealth, and if they have not thoſe means, to the poverty of the community. Population is not always a proof of the proſperity of a nation; the people may be very numerous, and very poor and wretched. A temporate climate, fruitful ſoil, bays and rivers well ſtocked with fiſh, the habits of life among the lower claſſes, and a long peace, are ſufficient to increaſe the numbers of people; theſe are the true wealth of every ſtate that has wiſdom to encourage the induſtry of its inhabitants, and a country which ſupplies in abundance the materials for that induſtry. If the ſtate, or the family ſhould diſcourage induſtry, and not allow one of the family to work, becauſe another is of the ſame trade, the conſequences to the great or the little community, muſt be equally fatal.

Is there not buſineſs enough in this great world for the people of two adjoining iſlands without depreſſing the inhabitants of one of them? let the magnanimity and philanthrophy of Great Britain addreſs her poor ſiſter kingdom in the ſame language which the good-natured uncle Toby uſes to the fly, in ſetting it at liberty—" poor fly, there's room enough for thee and me!"

I have the honour to be,

My Lord, &c.

THE

THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

NINTH LETTER.

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THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND CONSIDERED.

NINTH LETTER.

My Lord,

Dublin, 10th Sept. 1779.

BESIDES thoſe already mentioned, various other commercial reſtraints and prohibitions give the Britiſh trader and manufacturer many great and important advantages over the Iriſh. Whilſt our markets are at all times open to all their productions and manufactures, with inconſiderable duties on the import, their markets are open or ſhut againſt us as ſuits their conveniency. On ſeveral articles of the firſt importance, and on almoſt all our own manufactures, im-

ported into Great Britain, duties are impoſed equal to a prohibition. In the inſtance of woollen-goods, their's in our ports pay but a ſmall duty, our's in their ports are loaded with duties *, which amount to a prohibition †; their's on the exportation are ſubject to no duty; our's, if permitted to be exported, would, as the law now ſtands, be ſubject to a duty ‡ over and above that payable for alnage and for the alnager's fee. If the act of 1699 was repealed, the Engliſh would ſtill have many great advantages over us in the woollen trade.

In our ſtaple manufacture, the bounties given on the exportation of white and brown Iriſh

* 12th Ch. II. ch. 4. Eng.

† Yet in favour of Great Britain, old and new drapery imported into Ireland from other countries are ſubject to duties equal to a prohibition. Ir. act 14th and 15th Ch. II. ch. 8.

‡ On every piece of old drapery exported, containing 36 yards, and ſo for a greater or leſſer quantity 3s. 4d. and of new drapery 9d. for the ſubſidy of alnage and alnager's fee. See 17th and 18th Ch. II. ch. 15. Ir. But the Engliſh have taken off theſe and all other duties from their manufactures made or mixed with wool. Eng. act 11 and 12 W. III. ch. 20.

Iriſh linen from Great-Britain would ſtill continue that trade in the hands of the Britiſh merchant. On all coloured linens a duty* equal to a prohibition is impoſed on the importation into Great-Britain; but their's imported to us are ſubject † to ten per cent, and under that duty they have imported conſiderably. This inequality of duty and the bounty given by the Britiſh act of the tenth of Geo. the 3d on the exportation of their chequered and ſtriped linens from Great-Britain, ſecures to them the continuance of the great ſuperiority which they have acquired over us in thoſe very valuable branches of this trade. In many other articles they have given themſelves great advantages. Beer they export to us in ſuch quantities as almoſt to ruin our brewery; but they prevent our exportation to them by duties, laid on the import there, equal to a prohibition. Of malt they make large exports to us, to the prejudice of our agriculture, but have abſolutely

* Thirty per cent. by the Britiſh acts of 9 and 10 Anne, ch. 39, and 12 Anne, ch. 9.

† This tax is ad valorem, and the linen not valued

abſolutely prohibited our exportation of that commodity to them. Some manufactures they retain ſolely to themſelves, which we are prohibited from exporting, and cannot import from any country but Great Britain, as glaſs of all kinds. Hops they do not allow us to import from any other place, and in a facetious ſtyle of interdiction pronounce ſuch importation to be a common nuiſance *. They go further, and by laying a duty on the export, and denying the draw-back, oblige the Iriſh conſumer to pay a tax appropriated, it is ſaid, to the payment of a Britiſh debt. I ſhall make no political, but the ſubject requires a commercial obſervation—it is this—the man who keeps a market ſolely to himſelf in excluſion of all others, whether he appears as buyer † or ſeller, fixes his own price, and becomes the arbiter of the profit and loſs of every cuſtomer,

The

* Brit. Act, 9 Ann. ch. 12.

† Hence it is that the price of wool in England is ſaid to be 50 per cent. below the market price of Europe. Smith's Memoirs of wool.

The various manufactures * made or mixed with cotton, are ſubject by ſeveral Britiſh acts to duties on the importation, amounting to 25 per cent.

By another act, penalties † are impoſed on wearing any of thoſe manufactures in Great-Britain, unleſs made in that country. Thoſe laws have effectually excluded the Iriſh manufactures in all thoſe branches from the Britiſh markets, and it has been already ſhewn, that they cannot be ſent to the American. From Great Britain into Ireland all thoſe articles are imported in immenſe quantities, being ſubject here to duties amounting to ten per cent. only.

But it would be tedious to deſcend into a further detail, and diſguſting to write a book of rates inſtead of a letter ‡.

* 12 Ch. II. ch. 5. 3 and 4 Ann. ch. 4. 4 and 5 W. and M. ch. 5.

† 7 G. 1. ch. 7.

‡ When the commercial reſtraints of Ireland are the ſubject, a ſource of occaſional and ruinous reſtrictions ought not

Their ſuperior capitals and expertneſs, give them deciſive advantages in every ſpecies of trade and manufacture. By the extenſion of the commerce of Ireland, Great Britain would acquire new and important advantages, not only by the wealth it would bring to that country, and the encreaſe of ſtrength to the empire, but by opening to the Britiſh merchant new ſources of trade from Ireland.

It is time to draw to a concluſion. I have reviewed my letters to your lordſhip for the purpoſe of avoiding every poſſible occaſion of offence; I flatter myſelf every reader will diſcern that they have been written with upright and friendly intentions, not to excite jealouſies but to remove prejudices, to moderate and conciliate, and that they are intended as an appeal, not to the paſſions of the multitude, but to the wiſdom, juſtice and generoſity of Britain. Shakeſpeare could place

not to be paſſed over. Since the year 1740, there have been 24 embargoes in Ireland, one of which laſted three years.

place a tongue in every wound of Cæſar; but Antony meant to inflame; and the only purpoſe of thoſe letters is to perſuade. I have therefore not even removed the mantle, except where neceſſity required it.

In extraordinary caſes where the facts are ſtronger than the voice of the pleader, it is not unuſual to allow the client to ſpeak for himſelf. Will you, my lord, one of the leading advocates for Ireland, allow her to addreſs her elder ſiſter, and to ſtate her own caſe; not in the ſtrains of paſſion or reſentment, nor in the tone of remonſtrance, but with a modeſt enumeration of unexaggerated facts in pathetic ſimplicity; ſhe will tell her, with a countenance full of affection and tenderneſs, "I have received from you invalua-
"ble gifts, the law of * common right, your
"great charter, and the fundamentals of your
"conſtitution. The temple of liberty in
"your country, has been frequently fortifi-
"ed, improved and embelliſhed; mine erect-
"ed

* The common law of England.

" ed many centuries ſince the perfect mo-
" del of your own; you will not ſuffer me
" to ſtrengthen, ſecure, or repair; firm and
" well cemented as it is, it muſt moulder un-
" der the hand of Time for want of that at-
" tention, which is due to the venerable
" fabrick *. We are connected by the ſtrong-
" eſt ties of natural affection, common ſecu-
" rity, and a long interchange of the kindeſt
" offices on both ſides. But for more than a
" century you have, in ſome inſtances, miſ-
" taken our mutual intereſt. I ſent you my
" herds and my flocks, filled your people
" with abundance, and gave them leiſure
" to attend to more profitable purſuits, than
" the humble employment of ſhepherds and
" of herds-men. But you rejected my pro-
" duce †, and reprobated this intercourſe in
" terms the moſt opprobrious. I ſubmitted;
" the temporary loſs was mine, but the per-
" petual

* Heads of bills for paſſing into a law the habeas corpus act, and that for making the tenure of judges during good behaviour, have repeatedly paſſed the Iriſh houſe of commons, but were not returned.

† The Eng. act of Ch. II. ch. calls the importation of cattle from Ireland, a common nuſance.

" petual prejudice your own. I incited my
" children to induſtry, and gave them my
" principal materials to manufacture. Their
" honeſt labours were attended with mode-
" rate ſucceſs, but ſufficient to awaken the
" commercial jealouſy of ſome of your ſons;
" indulging their groundleſs apprehenſions,
" you deſired my materials and diſcouraged
" the induſtry of my people. I complied
" with your wiſhes, and gave to your chil-
" dren the bread of my own; but the ene-
" mies of our race were the gainers; they
" applied themſelves with tenfold encreaſe
" to thoſe purſuits which were reſtrained in
" my people, who would have added to the
" wealth and ſtrength of your empire what
" by this fatal error you transfered to fo-
" reign nations. You held out another ob-
" ject to me with promiſes of the utmoſt
" encouragement. I wanted the means, but
" I obtained them from other countries, and
" have long cultivated, at great expence and
" with the moſt unremitted efforts, that
" ſpecies of induſtry which you recommend-
" ed. You ſoon united with another great
" family,

"family, engaged in the ſame purſuit,
"which you were alſo obliged to encourage
"among them, and afterwards embarked in
"it yourſelf, and became my rival in that
"which you had deſtined for my principal
"ſupport. This ſupport is now become
"inadequate to the encreaſed number of
"my offſpring, many of whom want the
"means of ſubſiſtence. My ports are ever
"hoſpitably open for your reception, and
"ſhut, whenever your intereſt requires it,
"againſt all others; but your's are in many
"inſtances barred againſt me, with your
"dominions in Aſia, Africa and America;
"my ſons were long deprived of all benefi-
"cial intercourſe, and yet to thoſe colonies
"I tranſported my treaſures for the payment
"of your armies, and in a war waged
"for their defence, one hundred thouſand
"of my ſons fought by your ſide*. Con-
"queſt attended our arms. You gained a
"great increaſe of empire and of commerce;
"and

* This number of Iriſhmen was computed to have ſerved in the fleets and armies of Great Britain during the laſt war.

" and my people a further extenſion of re-
" ſtraints and prohibitions†. In thoſe ef-
" forts I have exhauſted my ſtrength, mort-
" gaged my territories, and am now ſinking
" under the preſſure of enormous debts con-
" tracted from my zealous attachment to
" your intereſts, to the extenſion of your
" empire and the encreaſe of your glory.
" By the preſent unhappy war for the reco-
" very of thoſe colonies, from which they
" were long excluded, my children are re-
" duced to the loweſt ebb of poverty and
" diſtreſs. It is true, you have lately with
" the kindeſt intentions, allowed me an ex-
" tenſive liberty of ſelling to the inhabitants
" of thoſe parts of your empire, but they
" have no inducement to buy, becauſe I can-
" not take their produce in return. Your
" liberality has opened a new fountain, but
" your

† The Furs of Canada, the Indigo of Florida, the ſugars of Dominica, St. Vincent's and the Grenades, with every other valuable production of thoſe acquiſitions, Ireland was prohibited to receive but through another channel. Her poverty ſcarcely gathered a crum from the ſumptuous table of her ſiſter.

" your caution will not ſuffer me to draw
" from it. The ſtream of commerce, intend-
" ed to refreſh the exhauſted ſtrength of my
" children, flies untaſted from their parched
" lips.

" The common parent of all has been e-
" qually beneficent to us both. We both
" poſſeſs in great abundance the means
" of induſtry and of happineſs. My fields
" are not leſs fertile, nor my harbours leſs
" numerous than your's. My ſons are not
" leſs renowned than your own for valour,
" juſtice and generoſity. Many of them
" are your deſcendants, and have ſome of
" your beſt blood in their veins. But the
" narrow policy of man has counteracted
" the inſtincts and the bounties of nature.
" In the midſt of thoſe fertile fields, ſome of
" my children periſh before my eyes for want
" of food, and others fly for refuge to hoſ-
" tile nations.

" Suffer

" Suffer no longer, reſpected ſiſter, the " narrow jealouſy of commerce to miſlead " the wiſdom and to impair the ſtrength of " the ſtate. Encreaſe my reſources, they " ſhall be your's, my riches and ſtrength, my " poverty and weakneſs will become your " own. What a triumph to our enemies, " and what an affliction to me, in the pre- " ſent diſtracted circumſtances of the em- " pire, to ſee my people reduced, by the " neceſſity of avoiding famine, to the reſo- " lution of traficking almoſt ſolely with " themſelves! great and powerful enemies " are combined againſt you, many of your " diſtant connections have deſerted you, " encreaſe your ſtrength at home, open " and extend the numerous reſources of my " country, of which you have not hitherto " availed yourſelf or allowed me the benefit. " Our encreaſed force and the full exertions " of our ſtrength will be the moſt effectual " means of reſiſting the combination formed " againſt you by foreign enemies and diſtant

" ſubjects,

" ſubjects, and of giving new luſtre to our " crowns, and happineſs and contentment to " our people."

THE END.

Years ending				
1772	2045 : 6	5947 :		115904 : 4
1773	1839 : 2	— — —		94098 : 10
1774	1007 : 11	— — —		63920 : 10
1775	2007 : 13	— — —		78896 : 14
1776	1059 : 15	— — —		86527 — —
1777	1734 : 7	— — —		114703 : 2
1778	1665 : 12	— — —		122755 : 15

APPENDIX. No. I.

Quantity of Wool, Woollen and Worſted Yarn, exported from Ireland to Great-Britain in the following Years:

Years ending the 25th of March	Wool			Yarn. Woollen.			Yarn. Worſted.		
	Stones.		lbs.	Stones.		lbs.	Stones.		lbs.
1764	10128	:	6	9991	:	14	139412	:	12
1765	17316	:		13450	:	12	149915	:	9
1766	21722	:	13	7980	:		152122	:	
1767	48733	:	8	7553	:		151940	:	9
1768	28521	:	11	11387	:	6	157721	:	3
1769	3840	:	16	5012	:		131365	:	2
1770	2578	:		3833	:		117735	:	9
1771	2118	:	5	4468	:	2	139378	:	14
1772	2045	:	6	5947	:		115904	:	4
1773	1839	:	2	—	—	—	94098	:	10
1774	1007	:	11	—	—	—	63920	:	10
1775	2007	:	13	—	—	—	78896	:	14
1776	1059	:	15	—	—	—	86527	—	—
1777	1734	:	7	—	—	—	114703	:	2
1778	1665	:	12	—	—	—	122755	:	15

APPENDIX. No. II.

Drapery.

Years ending the 25th of March	New. Quantity.	New. Value.	Old. Quantity.	Old. Value.	Linen Cotton. Silk mixed manufacture. Value.
1769	394553	49319 : 3 : 9	207117	144982 : 8 : 6	13402 : 10 : 7
1770	462499	57812 : 7 : 6	249666	174766 : 14 : 6	20907 : 18 : 2½
1771	362096	45262 : 0 : 0	217395	152176 : 10 : 0	20282 : 5 : 8
1772	314703	39337 : 18 : 9	153566	107496 : 4 : 0	14081 : 15 : 6½
1773	387143	48392 : 17 : 6	200065	147045 : 13 : 6	20472 : 7 : 3½
1774	461407	57675 : 17 : 6	282317	197621 : 18 : 0	21611 : 10 : 3½
1775	465611	58201 : 9 : 4½	281379	196965 : 13 : 0	24234 : 16 : 9½
1776	676485	84560 : 12 : 6	290215	203150 : 10 : 0	30371 : 16 : 8½
1777	731819	91477 : 8 : 9	381330	266931 : 0 : 0	45411 : 3 : 7
1778	741426	92678 : 6 : 3	378077	264653 : 18 : 0	52675 : 1 : 11

APPENDIX. No. III.

An Account of the Quantity of Linen Cloth exported out of Ireland to Great-Britain and Plantations, prior to the Year 1743.

Years ending the 25th of March	Linen Cloth exported to Great-Britain. Yards.	Linen Cloth exported to Plantations. Yards.
1705	739,278	19,742
1706	1,325,771	62,727
1707	1,847,564	81,037
1708	343,359	29,606
1709	1,539,250	113,939
1710	1,528,185	136,844
1711	1,131,629	89,262
1712	1,320,968	43,011
1713	1,721,003	86,357
1714	2,071,814	91,916
1715	2,000,581	133,752
1716	1,968,568	195,825
1717	2,260,243	151,240
1718	2,120,075	113,790
1719	2,235,357	117,288
1720	2,560,113	69,579
1721	2,398,103	95,488
1722	3,036,431	127,934
1723	4,060,402	112,952
1724	3,767,063	94,816
1725	3,755,430	70,052
1726	4,231,676	117,213
1727	4,596,089	151,977
1728	4,517,152	140,049
1729	3,701,485	183,363
1730	3,821,188	218,220
1731	3,612,408	85,697
1732	3,591,316	137,039
1733	4,621,127	129,244
1734	5,194,241	213,250
1735	6,508,748	202,759
1736	6,168,333	262,242
1737	5,758,408	309,827
1738	4,897,169	232,947
1739	5,737,834	197,671
1740	6,403,569	183,471
1741	6,760,025	394,374
1742	6,793,009	244,546